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THE NEXT MOVE IN EUROPE

BY every device of propaganda, the Fascist Government is fostering the impression that Italy is about to play a decisive part in the war. Speeches and the official press prepare the Italian people for action. The searchlight of publicity plays suddenly on the manoeuvres of the Italian fleet, though in fact it has been mobilised since early March. A German military mission visits Rome. A few students are drilled to demonstrate spontaneously against England and rumour reports the recall of Italian merchant ships. Has Hitler in fact called on his ally for early action, in spite of that dubious clause in the treaty which postponed any such obligation for three years? Are we, then, to expect that Italy will soon be a belligerent at grips with France and Britain on several fronts at once? Other interpretations are more probable. Hitler, some argue, may merely be asking for a show of ill-temper, in order to keep British warships idle in the Mediterranean. Again, the Duce may be bluffing, before presenting a set of blackmailing demands, but these are not yet explicit. There is no apparent preparation for a stiff bargain. Finally, and more probably, the Duce may intend to march, but in a direction that would not necessarily involve war with the Western Powers. Since they have guaranteed Greece, is Jugoslavia the predestined victim? Does he propose, perhaps, to revive Italian claims on Dalmatia? This may be the most likely guess, for by all accounts the Italian army is too ill-equipped to challenge the French, and the sentiment both of army and people is strongly against joint operations with the Nazis. It is noteworthy that the Vatican's press, in contrast with the Fascist press, has strongly condemned German operations in Norway and has greatly increased its circulation in doing so.

If the Duce likes to keep us guessing where he will strike next, so also does Hitler. The press campaign against Holland continues: so much so, that the Japanese Government is hinting that if Holland were overrun, it would look after the Dutch East Indies. But there are other indications that point rather to action in the Balkans. The whole peninsula is overrun by big contingents of German "tourists," who seem to include both propagandists and young men of the Gestapo, who organise Fifth Column activities. The interest in the Danube, to which we drew attention last week, continues, and a fleet of naval craft is said to be ready to carry on the policing of the river, for which Berlin has been preparing by diplomacy and propaganda. But Rumania presents the chief puzzle of the week. First it was announced that she had stopped all exports of oil, wheat, timber and vegetable fats. Later this was partially denied: contracts already sanctioned would not be cancelled: but the army had priority, at all events over oil and wheat. Specific mention was then made of renewed defensive concentrations both against Russia and Bulgaria. This was an unexpected response to M. Molotov's recent references to Bessarabia, which were, for the present at least, reassuring. All this may be only a dramatic manoeuvre of a weak and bewildered Power, which knows its danger and tries to look more formidable than it feels. Hitler must in the long run make sure of his supplies of Rumanian oil, whether by acts or threats; the stocks he got in Denmark, though no doubt a useful addition, will not supply Germany's needs for more than a fortnight of war.

The Struggle for Norway

From the British angle of vision the news that focused attention during the past week was a series of remarkable successes by the Navy. It sank the seven German destroyers that held

Narvik Fjord, covered the landing of marines, who then with Norwegian help attacked Narvik town. No more iron ore will reach Germany from these waters. Then came the feat of laying the most extensive mine-field on record round Denmark and along Germany's Baltic coast. The daring and rapidity of this stroke are remarkable, even if the minefield is not very thickly laid. Germany's naval losses in these Norwegian operations may amount to about a third of the various categories of her fleet. The rest of the news from Norway is less reassuring. The Germans are firmly established in Bergen and Trondheim, and from the latter centre have cut the narrow " waist-line " between the sea and the Swedish frontier. In spite of the sinking by our submarines of ten transports, the despatch of reinforcements continues, both by sea and air. The German plan appears to be to extend the triangle they occupy on either shore of Oslo Fjord, eastwards to the Swedish frontier and northwards up the railway to Trondheim. King Haakon, the Government and part of the army are resisting bravely, but they have to contend with a demoralisation that infects all the upper strata of Norwegian society. The escape of 3,000 Norwegian troops across the Swedish frontier is a significant symptom. At the head of the Fifth Column stands no less a person than the Bishop of Oslo, and with him were the chief of the Oslo police and some of the High Command of the army and navy. Thanks to the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent, it is now known that the capture of Oslo was a triumph for the Nazi tactics of penetration. Several days before the invasion orders went out from Oslo to the captains of the warships in the Fjord to land their crews and to the batteries not to fire on German ships. But for this treachery the Germans could never have forced the narrows. It was an accident that these orders failed to reach two small mine-layers, which then took their toll of the German fleet. By skilfully using such class-conflict as there was in this relatively harmonious society, the Germans surprised Oslo so completely that 1,500 infantry-men were able to take a city of 300,000 inhabitants, unopposed.

The Home Front

The fall of one point in the cost of living index last month is mainly due to seasonal and weather conditions, which the month before made eggs and certain other goods abnormally dear. But it is also a sign that the Government is still holding to the policy of keeping down by subsidy the prices of essential goods. The effects of the German occupation of Denmark and of the general Baltic situation have not yet produced any visible effect on food supplies, which have become in general more plentiful since the weather improved. The immediate reactions have been much more serious in the case of timber and of paper, which is likely for the time being to be very short indeed. Other shortages are the result of the drive to expand exports. Shops, though not customers, are to be rationed in respect of a wide range of textile materials; and we are very reasonably told that we must make our clothes last longer in order to provide more foreign exchange for the purchase of necessary imports. It looks as if the export drive is beginning at last. None too soon; we must have been using up our foreign resources at a rate which cannot possibly be sustained over a prolonged war. In face of the new economic situation, it is high time the Government made a more determined move for the expansion of home output. Mr. Ernest Brown talks hopefully about the prospect of an increasing absorption of the unemployed. But after seven months of war and the calling-up of so many men for the armed forces, there ought to be no unemployed—except the few who are really incapable of work. That there are still well over a million is a clear sign that our resources are not being properly used.

The New Communist Line

The British Communists have now faithfully adopted the new line given by Herr Ulbricht to the German Communists in his article in *Die Welt*. Whereas before they had successfully maintained an anti-imperialist attitude which impartially condemned both Western capitalism and Nazi Germany; they are now accepting the Nazi interpretation of the Norwegian invasion as a counter-war against British efforts to spread the war. They might, with some reason, have criticised the Allied governments for being unprepared fully to counter the Nazi reprisals that were certain if we made a determined effort to stop iron ore reaching Germany. But for a Stalinite who defended the invasion of Finland to talk righteously about the wickedness of the Allied violation of Scandinavian neutrality is simply preposterous. In a manifesto published last week the Communists accused " not only Chamberlain and Reynaud, but also the British Labour and trade-union leaders, of extending the war. They demanded it. They have justified it." In all this long exposure of " the real war-mongering purpose of the Western Powers," there is no word to suggest that the Nazis had any intentions on Scandinavia. To compare the *Daily Worker* headlines with those of the Nazis, quoted in " That Germany " is interesting and disturbing. This manifesto has seriously worried both the rank and file Communist and the fellow-travellers. But party discipline will probably triumph and its most serious consequence will be a threat to civil liberties. Those who have most bitterly denounced the Fifth Column and demanded the fullest resistance to Hitler only provoke anger and exasperation when they now excuse Nazi aggression even to the extent of suppressing all facts which do not suit the Nazi case. The Communists are playing directly into the hands of the most reactionary forces, and in so doing they may endanger the liberties of others beside themselves. Fortunately, their present line is so idiotic, that the most effective antidote will be not suppression but free publicity. Moreover, it gives to the Labour Party a great opportunity of rallying its disgruntled Left Wing, which was sympathetic to the Communists so long as their Russian sympathies did not carry them into the Nazi camp.

The Man-Power Debate

From Our Parliamentary Correspondent.—The debate on man power last Tuesday was extremely interesting. It was opened by Mr. Owen Evans with a thoughtful and constructive speech, in which he drew some remarkable comparisons between our war effort and that of Germany. The Minister of Labour made a brisk and unusually lucid reply, which gave a general impression of competence—within limits. He knows his facts. He gets on well with the Trade Unions. He is good at smoothing over the difficulties inseparable from the day-to-day administration of his Department. But it cannot be said that he displayed any real appreciation of the magnitude of his task.

The House was left with a sense of inadequacy, which pervaded the subsequent debate. Mr. George Hall, deputising at short notice for Mr. Greenwood, expressed it in terms of training, of the location of labour, of coal. He demanded to know precisely what the requirements of the Government were in order to keep the essential industries of this country going at full capacity. But no answer was forthcoming. Mr. Clement Davies was more outspoken. He pointed out that between 1933 and 1939 the Germans spent £6,000 millions on war production alone; and that they were now spending on their war effort at the rate of £3,200 millions a year, as against a combined total for France and this country of not more than £2,500 millions. He concluded that, even after seven months of war, there was no evidence of a comprehensive plan for dealing with the situation, or of decision on the part of the Government. Sir Henry Croft made an impressive plea for more divisions quickly; Mr. Horabin gave more statistics about the German war effort; and so a rambling and somewhat desultory debate grumbled its way to an unsatisfactory conclusion.

At one point Lord Winterton observed that the small attendance of members was symptomatic of the present attitude of the House towards the war. " There is a large attendance when we discuss questions of nudism or what a soldier's mistress should be called," he said, " but on a question like man power, the Chamber is nearly empty, as if it did not matter." There is more than an element of truth in this. The House as a whole is restless and dissatisfied. Stories, which only too often bear the mark of authenticity, continue to reach members of lack of equipment for the army, of

a slowing up of aeroplane production, of shortages of raw materials, of the difficulty of obtaining rapid decisions from the Government —particularly in the economic field. The new Balkan Trading Company, which ought to have been set up two years ago, is taking an unconscionable time to get under way. The blundering ineptitude of official British publicity, as a result of which the public has been alternately buoyed up and cast down without reason during the past ten days, seems to be ineradicable, and has certainly contributed to the general "malaise"; and the full implications of the recent ministerial reshuffle—described by Mr. Lloyd George as "footling foolery"—are now beginning to be realised even by the most fervent supporters of the Prime Minister.

At the same time members on both sides feel strongly that no useful purpose would be served, at this critical moment, by ventilating these matters in public. And no one wants to precipitate a serious political crisis. The result is that many people prefer to stay away from debates when important issues of policy might be discussed, and listen to the wireless bulletins, in the comparative mental security of their own homes, with such equanimity as they can muster. The remedy for this situation lies in the hands of the Prime Minister. And it is clear that for the present, at any rate, he has no intention of applying it. On the contrary, Captain Margesson surpassed himself in the debate which followed Mr. Churchill's statement on the naval situation last week by issuing an "ukase" that no one was to take part in it!

AN URGENT NECESSITY

The German invasion of Norway has cut off 80 per cent. of Britain's supplies of the raw materials for paper manufacture, and, in common with all other newspapers and periodicals, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will from next week on have to cut its measure to the pattern of war economy. In our case, this will mean using our page to the fullest advantage by reducing the size of the margins and by certain other modifications of the traditional format. Though there will be a certain loss of spaciousness, we are convinced that it will be possible, while carrying through these economies, to retain those features which have brought us a steadily increasing body of readers in recent years.

There are, however, two things which a journal cannot itself do and for which we must rely on the assistance of our readers. After April 29th, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, like all other periodicals, has agreed, in order to avoid waste of paper, to take no return of unsold copies. This lays upon the newsagent the loss for copies he does not sell; and quite naturally the newsagent cannot afford the risk of carrying a large number of copies for the sake of the occasional reader. After April 29th, unless each reader orders his copy from his newsagent or has it sent to him by post from this office, he will be very unlikely to obtain a copy. At the beginning of the war, we appealed to readers to make a firm order for their copies, and we should like to thank the very large number who responded to that appeal. Now what was desirable has become an urgent necessity both for our readers and for ourselves. The exigencies of war will, temporarily at least, liquidate the occasional readers, and we are sure that most of them are sufficiently addicted to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION to make an order now and so ensure their regular dose. The second way in which readers can help is by seeing that no words are wasted in the letters they contribute to our correspondence columns. We believe that these columns are one of the most important contributions of the paper to the cause of democratic freedom. To maintain their value, we would ask readers to write as often as before, but more concisely.

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

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BRITAIN AND THE U.S.A.

NOT long ago a Frenchman who had been asked to speak to American schoolchildren was quietly describing evacuation schemes in Alsace. He was interrupted by shouts of "propaganda," which continued until he had to abandon his talk. English visitors to the United States often meet with the same kind of hostile scepticism, and accounts of such incidents which filter through to this side of the Atlantic cause a certain irritation. The very existence of Britain and France are at stake in this war. We know that opinion in the United States is strongly anti-Nazi. And yet the most moderate statements of a British point of view are often treated with derision in America. This, we feel, is unreasonable. The isolationism of Mr. Chamberlain has been more bitterly criticised in the United States than anywhere else, and now at last we have made the decision to fight Americans preach to us from their bomb-proof pulpits as if it were American lives that are being lost in the North Sea. Those who have fought the battle for the collective system here have earned the right to attack Mr. Chamberlain, but an American isolationist can scarcely do so with logic or good countenance. But to allow ourselves to be irritated does no good. Let us try to understand.

While British sea power was unchallenged and her psychology as insular as her geographical position, we assumed an aggravatingly smug detachment. It was not until Munich that we finally lost our insular psychology, and it was not until the seizure of Prague that we discovered that we were inevitably part of the continent, not a detached Power, able to decide whether we wished or not to run the risks of playing a part in Europe. The process has been completed by Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway. Now we know that we can never again pull out of Europe. We live or die with the European Democracies. Our former condition of happy security with its moral preoccupations has passed to the United States which now stands in relation to Europe as we have lately stood. When American visitors talk to British people nowadays their attitude resembles that of many Englishmen in 1938. Just as the British were dubious about running risks for the Sudeten areas, so Americans warn us that the United States will not entangle herself in a war fought, as they are apt to put it, "to make Gibraltar and Malta safe for Mr. Chamberlain." We are now "the distant country" struggling for existence, and America is the candid friend who lectures us in our hour of trial and warns us against trying to turn a conflict, localised in Europe, into what British Ministers used to call "a world conflagration." And now it is the Americans who are conscious of a moral dilemma. They want Hitler stopped, but they prefer someone else to do the job. They hate Nazi brutality, they are not deaf to the appeal for small nations, they care about liberty, they feel the urgency of supporting the cause which they know, generally speaking, to be their cause. They fear that our defeat would end their own security. But then there is the other side. Cannot America remain, as President Roosevelt urged in his first neutrality speech, aloof from Europe's horror and develop herself an unbattered haven for the future of civilisation? What good came last time of abandoning the traditional policy of keeping out of European entanglements? Are not the problems of Europe hopeless just as the Czech problems were hopeless? Heart and head can find arguments both for running risks and for isolationism. We have had experience of this moral and intellectual dilemma; we should be able to understand it.

American readiness to seize on anything to our discredit is a symptom of this internal conflict. Just as some English people suddenly discovered in 1938 that the Czechs had not always

been perfect in their treatment of the Sudeten Germans, so the Americans recall the unhappy story of British rule in Ireland and do not always remember that the Free State is now as independent as any neutral in Europe. British policy, which has neglected some of the Colonies and given India neither freedom nor prosperity, has given them plenty to criticise; but Americans are not more eager than we have been in the past to respond to the reminder that no great Power has an untarnished history. One bold Englishman did remind an American questioner who talked about British ill-treatment of India that Americans, after all, have nearly exterminated their Indians, while we have multiplied ours and given them at least partial self-government. Others have pointed out to critics of appeasement that America is still, even to-day, aiding Japan's aggression in China by supplying her with the munitions of war. But the *tu quoque* argument never did much good. Much American criticism of British imperialism is justified; much of it is based on a complete misunderstanding of the difference between a Colony and a Dominion, or of the very considerable liberalising changes that have, in fact, taken place in recent years. The truth is that this criticism, whether justified or not, is made now because it provides a balm for an uneasy conscience. If help is not to be given to us, it is comforting for Americans to find reasons for thinking that we are not worth helping. And all the time Americans are drawn by a deep kinship. Just because our ties are strong and our relationship close, they fear that they will be dragged into our inferno. Their bitterness is a reflection of this fear.

America at the moment is certainly hard to please. We are required both to fight a full-blooded war—sometimes, judging from comments, a box-office war for the benefit of American correspondents—and also we are expected to be plaster saints. We are at one and the same time to cease to be a dominant imperialism with an Empire and a great navy and yet to fight with as little help as possible against the most powerfully armed State the world has ever known. If we do not bomb towns, we are not in earnest; if we stop the *Altmark* in territorial waters, we are violating international law. If the I.R.A. drop bombs and are not arrested, we are obviously weak and decadent. If we hang men who murdered a number of people in cold blood in Coventry, we are oppressors of a subject nation. We treat conscientious objectors with common sense and decency. This wins us some applause; but there are American newspapers which sneer because the percentage of conscientious objectors is larger than in the last war, and fail to add that one reason is that they are given an opportunity of alternative work in this country instead of being shot as they would be in Germany. None of this is reasonable and no informed American would hold that it was. What he would tell us is that we must not expect Americans to be reasonable in their present difficult and divided state of mind, and in any case the relations of Britain and America have never been very reasonable.

The very fact of close relationship and of ties that are so much deeper than those of acquainted friendship tends to make relations difficult. Resentment within a family may smoulder on and cause a bitterness which is harder to heal than an open quarrel between unrelated acquaintances. In the past the British have been too patronising and the Americans too sensitive. From the days of Dickens onwards British writers have laughed at the United States and Americans have retaliated by boasting of their material success and paying too much respect to our culture at the expense of their own indigenous and virile growth. It remains true to-day that Americans learn the history of Britain and know from the newspapers and wireless far more about European affairs than most people in England. The British, on the other hand, know nothing of American history, and are ill-informed about the institutions and conditions of the U.S.A. Americans bitterly resent the suggestion that their object to-day is to make large sums of money out of the war. Cordell Hull's impressive figures about our purchases of aeroplanes and certain munitions of war enable us to forget that the war has coincided with a slump in the United States and that while it has brought profits to a few it has also brought much economic dislocation. In Britain, in a word, there is little knowledge of the United States. In America, there is much knowledge but little understanding of Europe.

Here is a situation easily seized upon by Nazi propaganda. In the last war, British propaganda in the United States was energetic and effective, while German propaganda was incredibly clumsy. In this war, British propaganda has almost ceased in the United States. But the Germans are extremely active. They know better than to do propaganda in favour of Hitler, but they have organised an immense propaganda against the Allies and in favour of American isolation. The wave of anti-propaganda propaganda has reached astonishing dimensions and there are millions of Americans who believe to-day that they are fully inoculated against all propaganda when, in fact, they are far more the victims of Nazi propaganda than they ever were of British in the last war. We published a fortnight ago an article from a reliable correspondent giving some account of the huge hostile organisation which arranges for countless fly-sheets attacking Britain and supporting an isolationist policy. The ramifications of this organisation are far and wide and many good Americans, who have no idea of the source of their information, are unconsciously doing the work of the Nazis whom they detest as much as we do. The well-organised American Nazi movement now keeps in the background and leaves the work to usually innocent Americans, supported by the powerful Irish community. It is a strange moment in American history. Everything to the discredit of Britain is rumoured to be true. Every British reply is automatically labelled propaganda and when reports of our comparatively good deeds do get across, we are told we only do them to influence American opinion. Even when the American public was told of our good treatment of German seamen, some papers declared that this was propaganda to bring America into the war. The *New York Times* countered a rumpus in other papers about mails being held up at Bermuda "at the bayonet point" by saying that this at least could not be considered sauve British propaganda.

This is not a matter about which British people should get hot and bothered. Hitler himself is the best British propagandist and the seizure of Norway and Denmark cannot be brushed aside, nor can the sinking of a large part of the German navy in the North Sea be written off as British propaganda, though reports from neutral sources, influenced by Germany, may temporarily disguise Germany's loss. In any case, we have only one course before us—a course which is difficult to follow while we are still led by men with the record of the present National Government. The folly of antagonising the great mass of the Hindu population, when its leaders would co-operate had they been assured that they too were fighting for freedom, is a folly which should be remedied because it is folly, not because it would be good propaganda to change it. Smug complacency is our national vice; if it still creeps into our national pronouncements, even though we feel neither smug nor complacent, Americans might remember that they too have a liking for striking moral attitudes. If we are able to remain steadfast while the world rages, if we are able to organise our country intelligently—and that involves something like a revolution—if we preserve the essentials of democracy and show that we mind about humanity, even during the war, sooner or later we shall get the credit for so doing, but we should do so whether we get the credit or not. That is our task, and we have no quarrel with American isolationists except when they make no effort to understand. It was only after the moral conflict and bitter humiliation of Munich that we reached, with infinite reluctance and a full consciousness of its horror, the terrible conclusion that war was better than a Nazi world. We believe that an overwhelming majority of Americans are glad that we reached that decision even though their own conflicts are unsolved. Whatever they decide to do, we ask them to admit that and to remember it.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT SERVICES

WE have been told so often that war alone will abolish unemployment that, with war being actually waged, we are inclined to put the unemployment problem thankfully out of our minds. Yet the unemployed are still with us, after nearly seven months of war; and the type of unemployment that is most persistent under war conditions is that which constitutes the most difficult social problem—long-term unemployment either in the depressed areas or in those depressed groups which exist even in the most prosperous parts of the country.

Long-term unemployment, as matters stand, is mainly provided for through the Unemployment Assistance Board, which has as its largest class of applicants workers who have exhausted their right to unemployment benefit under the insurance scheme. The U.A.B. operates the best-known and most pervasive of the countless Means Tests to which the poor are subjected when they make any claim upon the social services; and in most people's minds the U.A.B. and the Means Test are inextricably bound up with each other. The first question that confronts anyone who is thinking about the right way of dealing with the unemployed is whether the Means Test ought to be kept or abolished, and this is apt to be regarded as synonymous with the question whether the U.A.B. ought to survive or not.

To the Means Test, as it now is, practically every working-class person—that is, nearly everyone who has direct and personal experience of it, or risks having such experience—objects very strongly indeed. There are, however, evident difficulties in the way of simply abolishing the Means Test. If it were simply swept away, and all unemployed persons became entitled as of right to draw unemployment benefit at the standard rate for an unlimited period, some households would greatly benefit; but others would suffer a serious loss. For the U.A.B. is a means of doling out extra money to meet special cases, and an appreciable fraction of the long-term unemployed fare better under the Means Test than they would if we simply went back to the conditions of 1924 and 1930, when statutory unemployment benefit could be drawn for an unlimited number of weeks. There is a case for a body able to take account of special needs, and to award assistance at a higher rate than could be allowed as of right to all applicants irrespective of their needs. In other words, there is a case for keeping the U.A.B. in existence and for working some sort of Means Test under its auspices, though not the Means Test as it exists to-day.

The arguments for retaining what is known as "the dual system" for the maintenance of the unemployed are persuasively set forward in the interesting and important book just published by the Fabian Society on the subject of the unemployment services.* But the case for retaining the distinction between "unemployment insurance benefit" and "unemployment assistance" depends on a thorough revision of the conditions under which the Means Test is at present administered. It should cease, once and for all, to be a "household" Means Test; for the working-class household is an eminently unsuitable unit to take for assessing the needs of the unemployed and their dependants. Working-class households are very often not voluntary groups of persons who live together from choice, but compulsory groups driven together by necessity; and it is an entire fallacy to suppose that all incomes coming into households of this type can be regarded as pooled (even subject to the mitigations allowed for under the present U.A.B. rules) without serious hardships and the engendering of much bad temper and real sense of grievance. The only tolerable Means Test—the only one consistent with working-class habits, feelings and sense of justice—is a personal Means Test, taking account only of incomes accruing to husband and wife and to dependants on whose behalf the applicant lays claim to an allowance. If this were accepted, the Means Test would no longer be resented, as it now is, in countless working-class households.

The outstanding importance of this Fabian report is that it faces frankly—as far as we know for the first time—this problem of the attitude which the Labour Party ought to take up towards the U.A.B. Hitherto, the official Labour attitude has been one of profound hostility to the Means Test as such—which was a correct attitude as long as the test was being applied by the Public Assistance Committees before the advent of the U.A.B. But with the establishment of the U.A.B. and the inclusion within its scope of uninsured workers, as well as those who have exhausted their benefit rights, the situation has changed. No one wants to hound the uninsured unemployed back to the P.A.C.s; and it is certain that, despite the regressiveness of the form of taxation known as "insurance contributions levied upon the workers," this form of taxation is preferred to others where it carries with it the right to a benefit payable without inquisition into household means. The agricultural workers gave the most convincing demonstration of this preference when they demanded inclusion in a contributory insurance scheme, despite the fact that they were entitled to claim assistance from the U.A.B. without making any contribution towards its cost.

The workers prefer insurance to any payment involving a test of means. But it is impracticable under present conditions to deal with the whole problem of unemployment under a contributory scheme. It is of the essence of such a scheme not to regard special cases, or make provisions for exceptional needs; and some body capable of doing these things is required. Nor could persons who have been working on their own account, and not for a wage or salary, be brought within the scope of contributory insurance.

Accordingly, the U.A.B. ought to survive; and with it there should continue in being a modified personal Means Test. But there is much wrong with the U.A.B. as it stands besides the household Means Test, which is the outstanding complaint against it of the poor. One thing badly wrong with it is the so-called "wages stop," which usually prevents the U.A.B. from awarding assistance at a level exceeding the applicant's "normal" earnings. If, as the Government tells us, the purpose of the U.A.B. is to meet all the needs of the applicant and his dependants, it is monstrous that real and proven needs should be unmet merely because the applicant cannot normally earn a decent wage. The excuse made for the "wages stop" is that it is required in order to preserve the applicant's incentive to find work; but in practice it penalises chiefly the wives and children of wage-earners suffering from mental or physical defects or unfortunate enough to belong to declining trades or to have lost with age their quality as wage-earners.

A much larger issue is that of the general level both of unemployment insurance benefit and of the assistance doled out by the U.A.B. This Fabian Report finds no difficulty in showing that the majority of households receiving unemployment assistance cannot be getting enough to maintain a physically sufficient standard of living unless their resources are being eked out by some form of private charity. Taking as its basis the standard adopted in the Bristol Survey (which is practically the same as the "George" standard used by other investigators), the Report shows that neither normal benefits nor U.A.B. scale rates leave enough, after paying average rents, to cover the sheer necessaries of life, even when nothing at all is allowed for such "luxuries" as tobacco, newspapers, Trade Union or Friendly Society contributions, or any of the contingencies of living. It is often urged, by those who admit this, that it would be impolitic to raise benefits any further because of the large number of cases in which adequate benefit or assistance would equal or exceed the earnings which the applicant would be likely to make if he found work. But the answer to this difficulty is to be found, not in continuing to starve the unemployed and their dependants, but in improving the position of the worse-paid employed, either by an extension of minimum wage legislation

* *The Unemployment Services: A Report prepared for the Fabian Society.* By Polly Hill. Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.

or by a general system of family allowances, or by a combination of both methods.

Family allowances, which now stand, thanks largely to Mr. Keynes, a much better chance of being adopted than ever before, would by themselves go a long way towards solving this particular problem; for the cases in which needs exceed normal earnings are largely, though not exclusively, those of workers with large families of children below the age of employment. If the normal incomes of such workers were improved by family allowances, the principal obstacle in the way of improving the condition of the unemployed would be removed, though there would still remain the need to deal with under-payment by extending minimum wage legislation to a substantial number of sweated trades in which men as well as women are the victims.

A further anomaly, mentioned incidentally in the Fabian Report, is the absurd discrepancy between the provision made for the unemployed when they are fit and when they are unfit for work. An unemployed man who falls sick cannot draw unemployment benefit at all, and can draw unemployment assistance only for two weeks at most. He is driven to the health insurance scheme, which provides benefits on a very much lower scale, and thus loses a part of his income at a time when his needs are greater than ever. There is no valid reason for paying a sick person less than one who is out of work; and it is sheer absurdity that there should be no dependants' allowances at all under the health insurance system.

This Fabian Report puts forward proposals which by their very moderation show how easy it would be to improve the system without any sharp break or any dislocation and subsequent reorganisation. There is no good reason why all the changes should not be made now with unemployment on the decline, rather than later when conditions are much more difficult. The unemployed, and especially the long-term unemployed, are suffering much more severely now than they were a year ago; and it would be much better to amend the system which causes them suffering than to keep on patching it up with inadequate supplementary allowances.

A LONDON DIARY

WHAT is the explanation of the crop of rumours that came apparently from Stockholm two days after the German invasion of Norway? The recapture of Narvik, Bergen, Trondheim and Oslo were all reported. Possibly over-enthusiastic and uncritical acceptance of rumour? Possibly, the rumours came from German sources. If you do not at once see how stories of German defeats should be Nazi propaganda, remember that during the war in Poland the German wireless, pretending to be British, told the Poles that Britain was sending so many thousands of aeroplanes to Poland, bombing Germany and so forth. Having raised Polish spirits, Dr. Goebbels had the charming task of depressing the Poles by telling them that these were British lies. I suspect a similar technique on this occasion. The spirits of the British people and of those who sympathise with the Allied cause all over the world, especially in America, were to be fortified by these accounts of British successes; the contradictions would then have the double effect of depressing morale and of making people more sceptical in the future about all news from the Allied side. The manoeuvre has on this occasion been fairly successfully countered by the subsequent sinking of a large part of the German navy. The only real counter to this type of propaganda is caution about the news. And that is the B.B.C.'s justification for what seems at times over-caution. There is no sense in giving more prominence to reports of German than of the Allied successes. But Mr. Churchill's decision not to keep us in the dark about losses and not to claim gains until they are certainly confirmed is a good principle, which will pay in the long run. Just because Mr. Churchill was cautious last week and because the Admiralty have not claimed bogus successes, we are now justified in believing the reports that come from the Admiralty and not believing in any other than the British authoritative statements.

* * *

Sir Kenneth Clark is a man of unusual ability; I am delighted to hear that he has been appointed to co-ordinate Home Publicity at the Ministry of Information. The appointment may lead to the removal of several unnecessary bottlenecks. Having made a real success of the Films Division, he can leave it to a capable successor and begin the job of organising a side of the work which has languished since the outbreak of war. This seems to be a sign that Sir John Reith, who has lain low for his first months of office, is now moving into action. He has now the beginnings of a Home Intelligence Service; and, with the substitution of Mr. Kirkpatrick for Professor Carr, he can reckon on drastic changes in our propaganda to neutral countries. Professor Carr showed in his book *Twenty Years of Crisis* brilliant powers of destructive criticism but, like many excellent Foreign Office men, he has no real interest or belief in the technique or the importance of publicity. Mr. Kirkpatrick believes in it and knows the ropes. He should do well. Unfortunately, however, the departmental jealousies, which are the most serious obstacle to efficient publicity, continue, though relations with the Service Departments have improved. Sir John now wishes to include under his control the B.B.C., with its new monitoring and foreign languages services. The B.B.C. is not so sure. The greatest weakness of propaganda has been the lack of an intelligent and thought out policy, and on the organisation side it has always been hampered, in my view, by an elaborate departmental machinery. Crewe House here and the Creel Committee in the U.S.A. succeeded in the world war, because they were not elaborately organised from above like government departments, but grew up naturally, as a number of loosely connected sections. There was central control, but the sections had real powers of independent action and were permitted to recruit their staff quickly to meet growing demands. In this war, curiously enough, research sections like Chatham House and the B.B.C. monitoring service have never been stinted, whereas, to take one instance, the B.B.C. foreign news services, which do the actual work of propaganda, are understaffed and miserably accommodated, when they should be run on the scale of a first class daily newspaper.

* * *

People sometimes argue that, after all, with his unhappy home, Hitler was bound to be a man of resentments, and that his Vienna experiences "explain" his racial mania. But consider Masaryk, whose new biography by Paul Selver (Michael Joseph, 18*s*.) I've been reading. His childhood in Austria-Hungary was far more miserable than Hitler's. The son of a Slovak overseer on an imperial estate, he was bullied by the Germans and himself bullied the Jewish boys at school. Then at 14, he was apprenticed to a locksmith in Vienna, but ran away when another boy stole his precious books; and was apprenticed again this time to a smith. After this he picked up his education by pupil-teaching until when he was 16 he got a job as tutor to the chief of police at Brno, and so made his way to the university. He must have been a difficult boy, moody, desultory in his work and wracked by doubts of the strict Catholicism in which he had been brought up. Once when his headmaster gently suggested that he should accept the Confessional as a formality, Masaryk replied "anyone who acts against his convictions is a scoundrel" and kept the headmaster off with a poker when he tried to throw him out. This story is the key to Masaryk's life. As emotional and embittered as Hitler, he sublimated his passions by an utterly reckless intellectual integrity. Any cause he sponsored must be mercilessly criticised, if it contained any element of falsehood: truth prevails. This brought him into conflict with Clericals, Pan-Slavists and most of all with Czech nationalists who preferred propaganda and racial hatred to truth and the co-operation of men of good will. It is typical of Masaryk that his first famous controversy—his life was spent in con-

troversies—was the defence of a worthless vagabond against the charge of ritual murder, despite the anti-semitism of his own people: the second the exposure as forgeries of "the Manuscripts," which purported to contain primitive Czech poems and were the pride of his fellow nationalists. He hated falsehood as much as he longed for Czechoslovak independence—indeed his Realist Philosophy was based on the religious paradox that freedom and truth are identical. When we begin to think that a successful revolution must be built on Hitler's model, it is well to remember this lonely professor, who, by sheer force of personality and defiance of practical politics, became the leader of his people and began his revolutionary career in 1915 as a vagrant exile. If he had been 40 instead of 68 when the Peace came, Europe might be still at peace to-day. Masaryk was too old and too tired to shape the new State according to his ideals; and his followers, though they learnt his realism, lacked the religion which gave it life. They were devoted nationalists and able politicians, but he was a prophet with a passion for truth and justice equal to Hitler's passion for power and deceit.

* * *

I was much interested in a letter I received from a lady, presumably of Communist sympathies. She objects to my remark in discussing Harry Pollitt's *Serving My Time* that a true Stalinist need not object to accepting money from the Tories. To illustrate her point she quotes a passage from a letter sent by Engels to Bernstein:

> This time Hyndman has finished himself. He has accepted money for Socialist candidatures from the Tories, in order to rob the Liberals of votes. . . .
>
> *It may be permissible to accept money from another party*, as an exception, and in certain circumstances: firstly, if the money is given unconditionally; and secondly, provided that the transaction does not do more harm than good. In this instance the contrary was the case. First, there was the condition that the Socialist candidates should put up in constituencies where they could only make themselves look ridiculous. . . . Secondly, Hyndman knew that to accept money from the Tories meant nothing but the moral destruction of the Socialists in the eyes of the *only* class from which they can recruit themselves—that is, the great radical working masses.

Curiously she seems to think that this refutes my point. On the contrary, it forcibly confirms it and I would have quoted the passage, had I known it. For my comment was that Harry Pollitt was not naturally a man of expedients, but of fervent morality and that his objection to taking enemy money was an ethical, not a political objection. The offer of it made him morally indignant. He did not calculate as Engels does, whether it might in special circumstances be permissible; he was furious that any Conservative agent or press lord should think he would take their dirty money.

* * *

Here are two more instances of the practice of racialism in Germany. The first is a sentence of six months imprisonment passed on a sixty-year-old business-man "for being in illegal communication with Polish prisoners." The *Voelkische* states that the defendant frequently spoke to the thirty Poles detailed to work in his factory and actually offered to send a letter for one of them to his wife. The letter was observed by the censor and proceedings were taken. The second report in the *Berliner Lokal-anzeiger* comes from *Kottbus*. Here a woman aged thirty was assaulted for having an affair with a Polish prisoner. Her hair was cut off, her head tarred and feathered and a placard was hung around her neck detailing her crime. In this state she was paraded round the town.

* * *

No one who knew Denmark can feel anything but an aching misery for its fate. It was a helpless country, strongly pacifist; it has made its choice. A Dutch friend tells me that the determination in Holland not to share this fate, but to resist to the uttermost is absolute. He writes of conversations with Ministers and common people. Everyone agreed that Holland would fight. His tobacconist said: "A country which does not even try to defend itself, has not the right to exist. I would as soon have shot myself as give in."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to H. S.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Mr. B. E. Wilkinson, in a speech to the members of the Incorporated Advertising Managers' Association . . . warned the advertising managers of many of Britain's leading firms of the probable invasion of this country by cheap, unbranded foreign articles after the war, which he said was being fought for a system under which the individual had the freedom within the Christian code to exploit his mental or physical qualities in any way he chose. Incidental to this system was business competition, which again involved the marketing of goods under brand names, supported by Press advertising and other forms of sales promotion of one kind or another.—*Times*.

A popular padre in France is the Rev. H. Beauchamp, M.C., the senior Roman Catholic chaplain with the Royal Air Force. He has a long record as a sportsman and he is also a fine ball-games player.

I hear that even now, at 62, he is proving that he is as good a rider across country as he ever was. Father Beauchamp's prowess and fine character have, I hear, so impressed the members of the officers' mess of a fighter squadron that they gave him their traditional accolade.

This consisted of seizing him and holding him upside down. Only those who meet with unqualified approval are subjected to this alarming honour.—*Daily Telegraph*.

I was thinking the other day how lucky we were not to have had, through both the last and the present war, a German holder of the Singles Championship.—*Observer* Lawn Tennis Correspondent.

The Government gives £50,000 to help wartime culture.

What sort of madness is this?

There is no such thing as culture in wartime.—*Daily Express* Opinion.

The first official story that British troops were landed at several points was contained in ten words, almost as brief an epoch-making statement as the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis.—*Daily Record and Mail*.

"If Nazi Germany had respected the Sabbath, we would not have been at war now."—Councillor Roberts reported in *The Manchester Guardian*.

THE ARAB QUESTION

[This article is by a responsible Arab nationalist. It represents a point of view that should be understood in this country.—Ed., *N.S.&N.*]

BEFORE the outbreak of war, the Palestine Arabs had been in revolt for three and a half years. The Syrians were very restless owing to the loss of Alexandretta, and later of their independence. In North Africa, the prisons of Tunis, Algiers and Morocco were filled with political prisoners. And in Aden, the youngest British colony, British bombers were, and still are, bombing hostile tribes. The grievances of the Arabs against both England and France were real and numerous, and German and Italian propaganda was constantly harping on those grievances.

Yet at the outbreak of War the Allies were greatly relieved to see protestations of support forthcoming from every quarter of the Arab world. The Arabs detested the principles of the Totalitarian states and resented their treatment of their smaller neighbours. By shelving their grievances they wished to pay homage to the ideals of national freedom for which the Allies professed to be fighting. They also wanted to give the Allies the opportunity to put those ideals into practice in the Arab world.

So far little that the Arabs expected has happened. Although the sincere and urgent advice of Egypt, Iraq and Saoudi Arabia for a more friendly interpretation of the White Paper of May, 1939, on Palestine has been partially met by Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, the French have abolished the Syrian and Lebanese representative institutions and substituted for them the autocratic rule of the High Commissioner. No wonder the situation in Syria, and in more parts than one of the Arab world, is unsatisfactory.

The right perspective is not, as has hitherto been done, to consider the questions of Palestine, Syria and North Africa as different unconnected problems. The inhabitants of those countries are one people. Their different struggles for independence and regeneration, together with parallel movements in Egypt,

Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula, are but different aspects of the same thing: the general Arab question.

That question arises from the Arab awakening, after centuries of Ottoman misrule, replaced by European Imperialism. That awakening results from their strong consciousness of their potentialities, physical and intellectual, and a desire to use them for improving their lot, by reconstructing their economic, social and political institutions. Only by some such general regeneration will they render themselves more able to take a greater part in the general effort of humanity for progress and civilisation.

But that essential reconstruction cannot be undertaken by the Arabs while they are divided, and while many of their countries still lie under different sorts of European rule. It can only be achieved by the Arabs themselves in their own way, and under their free governments. No European power could have done for the Turks what the Turks were able to do for themselves. Yet no Arab state can be secure in the enjoyment of its liberty so long as it remains separate from its brother states. Self-preservation dictates a close union between the Arab countries. Economic interests, too, correspondingly need, and will benefit from, such a union. Those States are, in the main, complementary and not competitory, in the economic sense. That union is, moreover, the only way to satisfy the strong sentiments which bind the Arab nation together.

By "Arab nation" Arab nationalists mean those people, bound together by a community of culture and language, who have shared a common fate for the greater part of their history, and who have the will to share a common future. Race and religion as such are no creed of the Arab national thought.

The "Arab world" includes those countries which are populated by an Arab majority. It comprises Western Asia (except Turkey) and Northern Africa. This may seem a very large area. But the community of sentiments which animate the seventy million Arabs in this area is strong enough to weld it together.

Arab Nationalists have no desire to re-establish the Moslem medieval Empire. They conceive of the political and administrative relationships between the different parts of the Arab world as resting on a federal basis. The boundaries of the component states must correspond to social, economic and geographical considerations. In the distribution of powers between the Federal and the State authorities, they take the American constitution, broadly speaking, as their model. Within the major states the principle of sub-federation should be applied to solve the intricate minority question, where the minority desires, and is large enough, to administer its own affairs. The question of the Capital of that federation is of minor importance. The headship of the federation can alternate between the rulers of the component states.

Such, in broad outline, is the ultimate aim of Arab Nationalists. Their immediate programme, however, is for a stronger and a larger Arab Entente. The present Arab Entente is a defensive alliance between Iraq, Saoudi Arabia and the Yemen. Egypt is drawing nearer, as is vividly illustrated by the close co-operation of that country with the other three states in the Palestine question. But Egypt will not be able to join the Entente effectively so long as it has no direct land connections with any of its members. Once Syria and Palestine become independent, they will be able to join the Entente, the difficulty in the way of Egypt joining it will be removed, and a solid bloc will be possible in the Near East. The Entente could then be strengthened in other ways: supreme councils for defence, foreign policy, and economic policy, representing the member states of the Entente, could be set up to direct and organise those affairs. The fact that the component States will be either allies, or friends of, Britain or France, makes a united foreign policy easier. The two main difficulties are clearly the questions of Palestine and Syria.

As to the first, the Arabs do not recognise that either Palestine or any other part of their countries is in any particular way connected with the solution of the question of Jewish refugees. They recognise, however, that as the result of Jewish immigration since the last war, there are in that country some half a million new settlers who, unlike the old Jews of the Arab world, are alien to the majority among whom they will have to live in language, culture and loyalties. The relations between those new settlers and their neighbours are the questions which the Arabs recognise, and will attempt to solve. They do not suggest that they should leave Palestine; but they will never approve any increase in the numbers, and any attempt to establish territorial independence for those settlers in Palestine. That is because it is the declared aim of responsible Zionist leaders to use any territorial independence they may get as a stepping-stone to the establishment of a bigger and a stronger Jewish state. Such a State the Arabs will never willingly allow, as it constitutes a wedge between their countries in Asia and Africa. Excluding territorial independence for the Jews in Palestine, and their artificial augmentation by immigration, any solution giving the Jews communal, cultural and municipal autonomy, and a share in the government of Palestine proportionate to their numbers, can be discussed. Such a solution can then be guaranteed by whatever international body the Peace may produce. The Mandate will come to an end, and a treaty of alliance between an independent Palestine and England can be concluded on lines similar to those of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty. Palestine will then be able to join the Arab Entente, which will help her to solve many of her defence and economic problems. The question of Transjordan could be solved on similar lines.

The question of Syria also can be solved by a treaty similar to the Anglo-Iraqian treaty. The minority question can be met by granting minorities local autonomy. The interests of France are not strategic, as Syria is not on the lines of French communications. The clericals and capitalists in France attach a greater importance to Syria, but their views should not for ever decide the fate of that country, and their existing interests and rights can be safeguarded. The Franco-Syrian and the Franco-Lebanese treaties, which France signed in 1936 but refused to ratify, solved those questions. France might have some misgivings about possible repercussions of Syrian independence in North Africa. But surely the establishment of more friendly relations between France and the Arabs in the East will help her to come to an agreement with the Arabs of North Africa on a more secure basis. France will definitely gain in prestige by an amicable solution of the Syrian question. The relations between Syria and the Lebanon can best rest on a basis of federation. She certainly would wish to join the Arab Entente. The Syrian Parliament in 1937 welcomed the conclusion of that Entente and decided that Syria should join it as soon as the Mandate was terminated.

The effect on the stability of the Near East of a stronger and larger Arab Entente will be enormous. It will bring together some thirty-five million people, and establish a solid bloc in the south-eastern corner of the Mediterranean. Its cultural, political and economic advantages to the countries forming it will be great. Its effects on British interests will not be dissimilar to the effects of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty. Those interests in the Arab world are mainly strategic, and a friendly Arab world will serve them much better than a permanent Mandate over an unwilling Palestine surrounded by unfriendly neighbours. Britain will not only be relieved of the task of keeping large troops to suppress recurrent insurrections, she will draw instead considerable support from those countries. Her gain in prestige by supporting such a plan cannot be exaggerated.

THAT GERMANY

Nordic Headlines

The deliverance of the North. Norway and Denmark taken under protection. German troops have marched and landed. Scandinavia saved from destruction.—*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 10th, 1940.

Lightning answer to England. . . . Sovereignty of both countries guaranteed.—*Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, April 9th, 1940.

Nordic Leader Writers

The whole German people gives a sigh of relief: from all lips comes one word, "At last." It is the same mood as in those sultry August days of 1939, when every day brought atrocities and provocations on the part of the crazy Poles.

Germany's unconditional right and holy duty to prevent the British attack on Scandinavia which had already begun, has not only removed the danger on the flank of the Reich, but also guaranteed the freedom, independence and sovereignty of the Nordic countries whose violation by the British the Norwegian Government itself had yesterday solemnly announced.—*Voelkischer Beobachter*, April 10th, 1940.

The Danish Government was not blind to the logic of the German attitude. It forbade its armed forces to offer any resistance and accepted the protection of Germany. The Norwegian Government was not so well advised as the Danish and some resistance is still being made. . . . These events guaranteed peace in the North by smashing the British war strategy.—*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 10th, 1940.

Marriage Under Sixteen Permitted

The Supreme Command announces that for the duration of the war, marriages will be permitted for professional soldiers in exceptional cases under the legally permitted age, in order to open to

racially valuable, healthy and responsible men an early path to marriage and child production.—*Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 30th, 1940.

Testing the Students

A pronouncement of the Minister of Education lays it down that students who fail to show the necessary capacity and qualifications, the proper attitude to life and a spontaneous co-operative spirit inside and outside the Universities, can in future be expelled from the Universities. Tests of the capacity and attainments of individual students must in wartime take place before the examinations are taken.—*Neue Züricher Zeitung* (Swiss paper), April 2nd, 1940.

Total Unanimity

The newspapers of all countries are full of wild rumours and suggestions and betray a nervousness only comparable to that of August, 1939. In contrast the German, the Italian and the Russian press maintain their distance from this commotion and limit themselves to an acute examination and explanation of developments in the international field. The authoritarian powers do not find it necessary to speculate about plans and intentions, because it is their plans and decisions which determine the course of events.—*Voelkischer Beobachter*, April 7th, 1940.

AWFUL EXAMPLES

IT was announced the other day that a number of ministers of religion and women temperance reformers were to assemble at Seminole, Oklahoma, and, if possible, get drunk. Oklahoma, it appears, is one of the few American States that are still Prohibitionist. The ministers of religion and women temperance reformers, however, did not decide to get drunk as a protest against Prohibition. Their object was merely to prove that the temperance beer still being sold in Oklahoma is intoxicating, and that therefore, though it contains only 3.2 per cent. of alcohol, the sale of it should be declared illegal. Hence their grim submission to the martyrdom of getting drunk.

No one, I am sure, has ever got drunk from more disinterested motives. It is no wonder that Attorney-General Nicholls warmly defended the martyrs of temperance against their critics, saying: "I wish to emphasise that their brief experience with beer is only in the interests of science and public morality."

The experiment, conducted in the true Baconian manner, was to consist of drinking "quantities of beer" and then trying to walk along straight lines and recite "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper" and afterwards—no doubt, when their heads had been held under the cold water tap and their articulation had returned—the experimenters were to appear as witnesses and give evidence as to the effect the beer had had on them.

I have sought in vain to discover how the experiment turned out. But it is easy to imagine what would happen in similar circumstances in other places. You can see the excellent people exchanging nervous glances with each other as they sit down and raise to their lips the first pints of beer they have ever tasted. Sister Brown is not an immediate success as a drinker. She sips at the beer as if it were poison, choking and making faces. The Rev. Malachi Z. Smith goes for his pint like a man determined to do his duty and gets it down at a draught. The company as a whole remains strangely silent during the first pint or two. They feel that it is a sin to get drunk, and yet they are conscious of an unholy desire to get drunk, for, if they end up sober, how foolish they will look! Besides, if they end up sober, they will fail in their great object of getting beer prohibited.

By the time they have finished the third pint, their sense of sin is less strong than it was. Instead of looking apprehensive, some of them have begun to smile. Sister Brown's face has become slightly flushed. She still feels perfectly sober, however, so she orders another pint. She is no longer coughing and making faces as she sips: she is no longer sipping, indeed; she is drinking her beer in gulps like a coal-heaver.

At the end of the fourth pint, remembering that she is engaged in an experiment, she turns to the Rev. Malachi and asks: "How're you feeling, Mr. Smith?" She is surprised at the beaming smile he gives her and at the enthusiasm with which he replies: "How'm I feeling? I tell you, sister, there's only one word for it. Swell. Absolutely swell. I'm afraid, sister, we'll have to drink a lot of this stuff before we get the evidence we're after. I tell you, sister, I feel ten years younger since we started. Let's have another two pints." Sister Brown dives into her new pint like a heroine. When she has finished, she looks at the Rev. Malachi with a laugh and says, "Mr. Smith, I never noticed it before, but you got two noses. Ye'" she adds with another laugh, "two noses and four ears. I can see 'em."

Mr. Smith, never having experienced double vision and being himself by this time a little muzzy in the head, is puzzled as to what she means. But, before he can solve the problem, his attention is distracted by an altercation in another part of the room. Brother Jones, it appears, being a man of the "do-it-with-all-your-might" school, has made his way through ten pints, and is demanding an eleventh. Brother Robinson, who has been going slow, has become alarmed and is urging him to have no more. Brother Jones stingingly wants to know Brother Robinson's reasons for urging him to have no more. "The truth is, Brother Jones," Brother Robinson replies nervously, "the beer has already taken effect. You are no longer sober." "Not sober!" cries Brother Jones, and, leaping to his feet and glaring round the company threateningly, he demands: "Who says I'm not sober? Does anybody, except Brother Robinson, say I'm not sober?" As there is no response from the scared assembly he looks at Brother Robinson with an evil leer of triumph. "You have heard, Brother Robinson," he says. "The verdict is u-hic-nanimous. I'm sober. Everybody admits it. I a-hic-wait your apology."

As Brother Robinson merely stares at the floor, Brother Jones continues, slowly beginning to take his coat off: "Well, there's only one 'ternative. Me and you, Brother Robinson, mus' go outside and settle this question—which of us is sober, and which is not?" And, as Brother Robinson makes no move, Brother Jones, flaring into a temper, rushes at him, slaps him on the face, seizes him by the throat of his collar and tumbles with him to the floor, calling him a "gol-darnde coyote" and by a number of similar epithets. Amid the screams of the sisters, the ministers of religion tear the men apart and force Brother Jones back into his chair, from which he calls loudly for another pint. So terrified are the others that no one dares to prevent him from having it, and, when it is brought to him, he drinks it down like a parched traveller in the desert who has at last reached an oasis. Luckily, he has now reached the somnolent stage, and, after a few minutes, falls forward, mumbling what a sharp ear might interpret as: "I'm as sober as a judge, I was never soberer in my life."

In spite of the behaviour of Brother Jones, the others present, all firmly convinced of their own sobriety and therefore still lacking as complete evidence as they set out to get of the intoxicating qualities of beer, feel compelled to go on drinking. Gradually they become a queer mixture of hilarity and gloom, some of them making jokes the point of which no one can see and getting a hearty round of laughter all the same, some of them weeping and confessing their sins, others of them singing choruses about cowboys in melancholy voices. The Rev. Malachi is by now sitting with a glazed expression, crooning "My Old Kentucky Home" and shaking his head dolefully at the end of each line as though it meant a lot to him. . . .

Next morning, all the members of the company who have the strength to get out of bed are to be seen going round their friends, asking them what is the best cure for a headache, a pain behind the eyes, twitching cheeks, trembling of the knees, a fiery-furnace feeling that goes down from the throat to the stomach, and a queer sort of general all-overishness. They try raw eggs and a number of chemical pick-me-ups; but none of them begins to feel better till they meet a non-teetotaller who assures them: "There's only one remedy—a hair of the dog that bit you. Go and have a couple of pints, and maybe

after that another pint, and by the time you've finished the third pint, you'll feel more normal than ever you've felt in your lives." It seems wrong, but what choice have desperate men and women, eager to get themselves fit to appear in the witness-box that afternoon? And certainly, as they go on drinking their beer they have to admit that it has an extraordinarily sobering effect. Their hands cease to tremble; their faces cease to twitch; their outlook on life becomes healthily rosy.

They are in the best possible form when at last they set out for the hall where they are to give evidence. They sing choruses gaily as they march arm in arm through the streets, and shout gay retorts to the shopboys who call out rude remarks to them. When they arrive in the hall, Brother Jones is the first to be called, and the members of the court begin to pull long faces as he tells them how he had drunk beer all night and, at the end of it, was as sober as he had ever been in his life. "Beer," he declares emphatically, "is a temperance drink—the best temperance drink I ever tasted." Sister Brown admits under pressure that the beer might have been slightly disturbing, and the Rev. Malachi confesses that after drinking it he had had a mild headache, but suggests that this was due to something that had disagreed with him at dinner. The court is in despair by the time of the appearance of the last witness, Brother Robinson, who is just about to tell the truth about the disgraceful orgy of the previous night when he receives a fearful kick on the shin and a number of blood-curdling threats from Brother Jones that reduce him to dumbness. Stammering, "I have nothing to say," he subsides mournfully into his seat. . . .

And that is why, the great experiment having failed through the weakness of human nature, men are still allowed to drink beer in the State of Nowhere.

I do not say that this is what happened in the town of Seminole. I merely wish to utter a warning against trying to suppress vices by practising them even in an experimental way. If you believe in the evils of betting, the great thing is not to bet: if you bet—even as an experiment—and win, you may change your opinion. Similarly with beer. The teetotaller should not toy with it. If he wants to know whether it is intoxicating or not, it is a mistake for him to drink it. He should imitate the vivisectionists, and try it on a guinea-pig. Otherwise, for him it may be the first drop that counts.

Y. Y.

IN MEMORY OF SHELLEY WANG

CHINESE WRITER, DIED HONAN, JULY, 1939

(From a longer poem)

I CANNOT cheat my thought. I remember too well
his bland smooth face by that hearth, his cigarettes,
his explanation of the characters,
the firm fist with the brush held vertical,
his glinting glasses laminated thick,
his way of speaking of his early days;
his wise grandfather, poetry, and tea,
Confucius, soya beans, and Mao Tse Tung. . . .

He was a restful man, a quiet scholar,
compact of wisdom courage tolerance,
a gentle poet even of our hills
making a vivid stanza as he pass'd,
disliking our coarse literal art's conceit,
and setting style and reason against despair.

For all his greatness life could offer him
only a little death in a vast campaign,
a manuscript unpublisht, and a book
of badly printed verse on wartime paper.
Yet I do not think he would have understood
that sick word failure. There are other words. . . .

JOHN HEWITT

Miscellany

THE LEADER

THEY prayed for one to guide and lead,
He came at last unheralded
To give his people in their need
Work, peace and bread.

He warmed them at the fires of hate,
He fed them on imagined wrong,
He made the race inviolate,
Feared, safe and strong.

Evil with good he reconciled,
They for his blessings sacrificed
Daughters and sons, the unborn child,
The creed of Christ.

He showed earth's kingdoms spread below,
He scaled the height; they headlong fell
The soul's and body's death to know
And war's unutterable hell.

SAGITTARIUS

THE LIQUIDATION OF THE FREE-LANCES

(BY ONE OF THEM)

EVEN the Balfour-Campbells—if we take them as representing the safe, and salaried members of our upper-middle class—must have been astonished last Christmas to note what a number of *really nice* people have somehow failed to keep up with them. That clever Dr. Such, who was beginning to do so well in Harley Street, has closed his consulting room and put his house up for sale. What can it mean? Nurse Right, with all her certificates and recommendations, does not seem to have anything to do, not even war work; Mr. Peristyle, the architect, was actually sued the other day for his rates. There was something about it in the papers. What a dreadful thing for poor Mrs. Peristyle and the girls! If the Balfour-Campbells were to pursue their inquiries beyond their own circle, they would find that even among certain sections of the "commercial" middle-class, loss of business, due to the war, is almost as common as profiteering, while as for the people who "go in for art and that sort of thing," many of them appear to be completely destitute. The professional artist from the nature of his occupation comes under the category of "free-lance." In other words he is independent and his own boss. Among the free-lances—painters, authors, poets who keep the pot boiling by writing reviews of books or art criticism, unattached journalists, playwrights, actors, singers, teachers of music, interior decorators and the like—are to be found many of the most intelligent, well-educated and valuable members of the community. If we have any full-blown or budding geniuses, it is certainly among the free-lances that they are to be found, not among the Balfour-Campbells—the bureaucrats and salaried yes-men. Can we afford to let them go under? In an increasingly regimented and standardised world, the services rendered by free-lances and the kind of work they perform, have come like "civilisation" itself to be regarded as luxuries, with the result that whenever there is an economic blizzard the free-lances are the first to suffer. Although, like everyone else, their ability to live and pay their debts depends entirely on their earning capacity, the market for their goods and services—capricious and insecure at the best of times—may be destroyed altogether in a period of international crisis. As soon as war breaks out, a connection or practice built up by years of endeavour, may easily disappear overnight. The less prosperous, but not necessarily the less deserving or talented of them, can be reduced to destitution in a few weeks or even days. Their homes have been broken up, their treasured possessions sold, their careers temporarily

wrecked. Their plight is, of course, no worse than that of the Bloomsbury boarding-house keepers, owner-managers of hotels in danger zones, garage proprietors and other members of the respectable middle classes whom the war has ruined. The problem of what is to become of all those who before September of last year were living at the rate of from £400 to £1,400 a year and now find themselves penniless, must be considered as a whole. Up till the present, as they are not organised and pride keeps them dumb, it is hardly being considered at all. About the vast army of unemployed "black-coated" workers, down-and-out actors, writers and artists and bankrupt business men, since they are not registered or insured, there are no reliable statistics. But the distress among them is far greater than most people realise.

What happens when the lessee of a suburban house or London flat, at a rent of from £100 to £200 per annum, suddenly finds that his income has vanished? Obviously, if he cannot earn, he cannot pay his debts. Landlords cannot collect rent from the penniless, mortgagees cannot recover arrears of interest; tradesmen must wait indefinitely; even the Income Tax authorities are baffled in their attempt to extract blood from those who have already been bled white. Mountains of unpaid debts are now clogging the wheels of trade all over the country. As there has been no moratorium, the ordinary processes of the Law are being set in motion to recover them. No doubt there are the usual proportion of debt-dodgers—people who could pay their bills, but dishonestly evade them—but little attempt seems to be made to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. The Courts (Emergency Powers) Act 1939, offers small protection to the middle-class debtor, unless he can afford to hire a solicitor to plead for him. Leave is still being granted to distrain in cases where the debtor has written to inform the Registrar of the Court that, as a result of the war, he has no possessions and no income. Men whose London homes have already been sold up are, in consequence, being pursued even to furnished lodgings in the country by "bums" waving terrifying but futile "orders." For one debt-evader who is successfully squeezed in this fashion, a thousand innocent people are having costs uselessly piled up against them. I could easily fill this article with heart-breaking "case-histories," within my own knowledge. Most of my readers, I imagine, could do the same. What the victims find hardest to bear is the contrast between their own ruin and the staggering excess profits made by others no more deserving than themselves. As a garage-proprietor put it to me the other day: "Why should I have to face bankruptcy merely because my trade is to sell petrol, whereas, if I were a manufacturer of machine tools or something of the kind, I should be preparing to send my sons to Eton and dreaming of a peerage?"

What then is to become of our ever-increasing army of middle-class paupers, who until recently were the "backbone of the country"—men who were once useful members of society and proud of their independence and enterprise? If the nation is to make the best use of its brains and energy, in the struggle before us, the problem cannot just be ignored and left to solve itself. Taking a long view, the section of the new poor in which I am specially interested—the free-lances—seems to me doomed. No young writer or artist, after this war is over, will ever dare to be without a safe job. We shall become, more than ever, a nation of employees, bossed by captains of industry. Authors, subject to good behaviour, will be paid a weekly wage by publishers and drafted to their appropriate departments—fiction, science, belles-lettres. Artists will have to pass examinations before admission, as salaried workers, to the studios of Advertising Agencies, Piccadilly Portraits (limited), or Complete House Furnishers. ("We can do you a landscape in best quality oils, for five guineas.")

There are few enough independent journalists to-day: in five years there may be none. Fear of starvation, rather than Fascism, will effectively destroy the free expression of ideas and the "honour and dignity of the free mind." When the free-lance is finally liquidated, our art and literature will all be produced by little men in striped trousers, Anthony Eden hats and rolled umbrellas, who are punctual at their offices and incapable of dangerous thoughts. What then will be the fate of our English civilisaton for which we are supposed to be fighting? The question is easily answered. Already the Balfour-Campbells and their like are in control of almost everything, from pigs to information, from shipping to the B.B.C.

LEAR AT THE OLD VIC

OWING to Shakespeare's gigantic prestige playgoers, where he is concerned, approach Poetic Dramatic Art in the right spirit. Their sensibilities have been so heightened and conditioned by the ceaseless praise and commentaries of poets, critics, scholars, that they do not allow improbabilities, unrealities, incongruities to check their responses or lessen their admiration. He is the one exception. "It *must* have been splendid; though if Shakespeare had not written that scene or drawn that character, I might really have thought. . . . No: of course it was the actor's fault it seemed false and flat. Or could it have been my fault? I confess I didn't quite follow all that was said. Other scenes I did think moving, splendid." Will anyone deny that something like this inner colloquy represents what the public feels when they attend a play by Shakespeare? They have been mesmerised into taking this attitude, and it happens to be the right one. They have been persuaded by Shakespeare's prestige into waiving aside objections they would have vociferously uttered against the work of any other dramatist—which is unfair but fortunate. They have adopted the point of view of Aristotle that "impossibilities are justifiable if they serve the end of poetry . . . if they make the effect of some portions of the work more striking." For as Longinus observed after him, "the effect of genius is not to persuade (or convince) the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves . . . and the object of poetry is to enthral." "What are the greatest stories in the world?" Professor Stoll asks in *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* (Cambridge Press) and he proceeds to give a list of items of which few would dispute: "All of them embody situations improbable to an extreme degree. Their improbability is the price of their effectiveness: such fine and fruitful situations life itself does not afford." *Lear*, of course, is a mass of impossibilities, but nearly all of them can be justified on the ground of dramatic effect—as exciting an audience in the highest degree possible. But since an Elizabethan audience was more excitable, more sensitive to poetry and more accustomed to stage conventions than we, who are not only more self-conscious but also by habit of mind psychological realists, the test of any modern production of an Elizabethan play is the degree to which it helps us to be transported out of ourselves, in spite of the flagrant improbabilities and those stage conventions by means of which that heightening of situation was attained. The old method of Shakespearean production was to take one of his plays and by cutting and riveting it and providing gorgeous scenery to turn it, as far as possible, into one inoffensive to our sense of reality. It took years to convince stage-managers that this was wrong, that it entailed often not only the sacrifice of the finest poetry, but also destroyed the dramatic effect of the scenes preserved. Thanks to the example of William Powell and Granville Barker and to the exhortations of some critics, it gradually began to dawn on the modern Theatre, that the way to make Elizabethan stage-conventions acceptable (or if you like inconspicuous) was to adopt them frankly. If there is as little before the eyes to excite a demand for realism; if the words, which were often purposely written to supplement the absence of scenery, are properly spoken; if the scenes are allowed to follow each other with the rapidity and in the order intended; and if the gestures of the actors are controlled by convention—this is particularly difficult to secure owing to their training on a realistic stage—then, the emotional effect on the audience will be far greater, and the irrelevant questions of a matter-of-fact modern audience will be stilled.

The production of *Lear* at the Old Vic has the great merit of taking the play straight through; breaking the action only, on Mr. Granville Barker's advice (*Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series*, Sidgwick and Jackson), at the close of Scene 6, Act III. This has the effect of welding the sub-plot of Gloucester and his sons and the tragedy of Lear and his daughters together in the manner Shakespeare intended. The production also gives what I have never seen given before, due emphasis to the scene of Gloucester's

eyes being scooped out. If this strong horror is not allowed proper place after Lear's storm and madness scenes an emotional anticlimax is apt to be felt by the audience while the moving reunion with Cordelia is preparing and the double story continued.

In the interpretation of poetic drama the resources at the actor's disposal fall to my mind in this order of importance: 1. Voice. 2. Gesture. 3. Dress. The voice is the main instrument for conveying emotion inherent in the words, but in speaking verse the actor should take care not to put too many inflections into his voice in the effort to be more expressive. Changes of pitch and note are, of course, necessary, but many and quick changes are apt to dissolve the form of the speech and to lead also to inaudibility. When the words are the very vesture of thought they will convey the emotion. I thought that the actors at the Old Vic and Mr. Gielgud himself did not observe this rule enough. Great verse can always be delivered more calmly and ceremoniously than an actor under stress of emotion finds it easy to believe; yet his emotion, if it is there, will find its way into his voice of its own accord, and in a singularly moving and beautiful way, without his adding the dramatic energy which the meaning seems to require. I am not saying, of course, that the great tirades of Lear should be spoken calmly. There are occasions when a voice of tremendous compass (greater than that of Mr. Gielgud) is required and frenzy predominates. But it is astonishing what the words will do by themselves. Mr. Gielgud struck me as being at his best (which is very good) in the opening scene; in the scene in Goneril's castle when Lear comes back from hunting (his curse delivered from the door was a fine piece of elocution and gesticulation—quiet, merciless, with a superb yet moderated crescendo); when Lear, decked like Ophelia with flowers, lashes in loosest language the hypocrisy of the world. He was, undoubtedly, most moving in the scene when Lear wakes from sleep to recognise Cordelia. The mad-storm scenes (perhaps the most difficult scenes to play in drama) need much subtler orchestration than they have received: the voices of Lear, poor Tom and the Fool. The entry "Howl, howl, howl" with Cordelia in his arms is beyond the compass of his physical energy and Lear's death from joy at thinking that she lives needs better framing than it received the first night. Also Albany's cry "Great thing of us forgot!" (Edmund's order to kill them both) so essential to the entry of Lear, must ring out more clearly. Mr. Harcourt Williams's Albany wants seeing to: he appears too much of a muff; and a laugh of sympathy greeted Goneril's line after embracing Edmund (she is comparing him with her husband), "O the difference of man and man." This should not be. Miss Nesbitt's Goneril is not *intensely* evil enough, and her dress suggests the modern adventuress; her laugh in her last exit might have issued from the lips of "the worst woman in London." Cordelia, alas, was ineffectual—empty. Miss Tandy plays her as an Ophelia! Cordelia is, of course, a girl of spirit and with all Kent's loathing of humbug and tenacity of devotion—in spite of being young and gentle. Miss Tandy must put more than passive pathos into her part. Mr. Lewis Casson's clipped elocution and vigorous reserved gestures make him an admirable Kent. True it is perhaps the easiest part in the play, but he acts it thoroughly and well. I don't know how the Fool ought to be acted, but I think he must have a singing voice: that is essential. Mr. Haggard took enormous pains with the Fool, but Shakespeare's Fools are non-conductors of humour now. It is safest to cut the airy acrobatics and falsetto voice and be as natural as possible. The only good Fool I ever saw was Hayden Coffin in *Twelfth Night* who sang sweetly and was too old to skip and posture.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"New Faces," at the Comedy

New Faces is distinguished by its freedom from top-line stars, and is, perhaps for that reason, the best revue in town. The common characteristic of all Mr. Maschwitz's young ladies and gentlemen is their extreme versatility. Miss Betty Ann Davies is not only the ingenious mistress of several sorts of ingenuousness, but can also be charmingly sophisticated; while Messrs. Charles Hawtrey and Bill Fraser provide between them enough combinations and permutations of parody to surprise a mathematician. No doubt they will soon select what they imagine to be their best lines and settle, like a great many famous comics, into a prosperous and unchanging rut; but at present they are still delightfully able to keep their characters out of their brilliant impersonations They are fortunate, of course, in having such excellent material. Most of the acts are amusing and original (a lecherous count who is cursed with the unhappy power of undressing women with his eyes; an illustrated dialogue between *Punch* and *Esquire*), the more conventional stuff (a vivandere's song; Shakespeare set to swing) is very brightly done, and one of the sketches ("Pick-up," with Miss Davies and Mr. Fraser) is the wittiest of its kind we have seen for years. For some reason revues invariably insist on paying tribute to Art and Feeling; and even Hedley Briggs's polished production cannot prevent a flat-footed ballet of the Passions and a dialogue with a dead lover in a Paris bedroom from being acutely embarrassing. There is, however, comparatively little of this; and the principal sentimental songstress (Miss Judy Campbell) redeems her script by her looks and remarkable alto. *New Faces* strikes a happy compromise between lavishness and intimacy, and is performed by a fresh and enthusiastic cast whose faces, one trusts, will not remain new very long.

"The Country Wife," at the Little Theatre

Most reviews of this production have concentrated on the smuttiness of the play, neglecting its wit and its theatrical effectiveness. Of all the Restoration dramatists Wycherley had the strongest sense of the stage, and *The Country Wife* is his masterpiece, though we should very much like to see *The Plain Dealer*. In the recent production at the Old Vic a clever actress made nonsense of the play by presenting Margery Pinchwife as a wizened and experienced coquette. At the Little Theatre Miss Hermione Baddeley is excellent, a plumpish buttercup whose simplicity learns quickly, but not immediately or entirely, the tricks of the town. Her full-blooded performance is perfectly suited to the style of the play. Mr. Alec Clunes threw away the most imaginative line in the play, the postscript about the squirrel, but his voice and demeanour are convincingly virile, and we could believe both in his fascination and his prowess. These two admirable performances were remarkably well supported, especially by Miss Ursula Jeans: the producer, Mr. Miles Malleson, and the whole cast deserve congratulations. The setting is agreeable and ingenious. What a pleasure it is to hear well spoken the forcible elegances of late XVIIth-century diction.

"The Jersey Lily," at the Gate Theatre

Louis and Lily are desperately in love, but marriage would wreck his valuable career, so she vanishes from his life, being much too respectable to dream of a *liaison*. The only point of this simple little plot is that it is about real people—Louis is Prince of Battenberg, Lily is the most famous beauty of her time, Mrs. Langtry. Such a play must stand or fall by its ability to give us the illusion of truth—and this play does not stand. The author has not a good sense of period—for instance, he allows his characters, in the 'seventies and 'eighties, to use the word "escapists," and to talk of an actress having her name "in lights." Then there are real characters, like Lord and Lady Somers, with the dates all impossible. The producer, moreover, allows King Edward VII, of all people, to mispronounce Marienbad, of all places. Such details are disastrous. But perhaps the author does not wish to be plausible: certainly he is content to raise a laugh by making the Prince of Wales crack most improbable jokes about his mother and sisters. This odd charade, though exasperating is not often boring, chiefly because the acting is good. Miss Hermione Hannen is touching and very charming as Mrs. Langtry, and Mr. Leo Genn gives great gusto to the author's version of Edward VII. But it is Mr. Paul Hernried's evening. As Prince Louis he is dignified, moving and persuasive, this is fine acting, and when he speaks we can for a moment suspend disbelief. Miss Ruth Taylor, Mr. Liam Gaffney, Mr. Cecil Winter and the rest of the cast are excellent. Mr. Gomer Parks has produced an uncommonly pretty set for the garden scene.

"Coppelia," at Sadler's Wells

The latest production of the Vic-Wells Ballet, *Coppélia* in its entirety, with scenery and costumes by William Chappell, was the occasion for a very fine performance by the whole company, including the orchestra under Constant Lambert, and well deserved the demonstrative ovation it received. William Chappell has designed very effective and lively scenes and costumes, which realise to perfection the chocolate-box romance of Delibes'

enchanting and jubilant music. The lighting of the first scene, which distantly though far from dimly reminds one of a Saxon village in Rumania, rather over-emphasises the crude colours of the Slavo-Scandinavian costumes; in the Edwardo-Neapolitan third scene the designer's fancy has rioted with altogether delightful effect, and the principals, Mary Honer and Robert Helpmann, are so exquisitely dressed that undressing must be quite a penance.

Mary Honer danced and mimed the exacting part of Swanilda with admirable virtuosity, and was perfectly partnered by Robert Helpmann, who had to take Harold Turner's part almost at the last moment. Claude Newman gave a very fine performance of the magic toymaker, Dr. Coppélius, with a full realisation of the poignancy of disillusion which the second act demands. Bunty Kelley, who showed so much talent as the Child in *Concurrence* during the last Russian season, made a first and charming appearance as the doll Coppélia, and the whole doll-corps de ballet was remarkably good. Of special excellence, as usual, were the solos of Pamela May and June Brae in the third act, and the fine dancing of Ursula Moreton, Richard Ellis, Patricia Garnett and Jill Gregory also deserves special mention. But really the whole corps de ballet deserves special mention. *Coppélia* is another triumph for Ninette de Valois and her company.

"Abraham Lincoln," at the Westminster

Lincoln makes an admirable dramatic subject; and John Drinkwater's chronicle play is skilfully contrived to build up both the sequence of events and the character of a humane, simple man, whose greatness matches the moment he is faced with. His public life is given in scenes that are forceful and good theatre, while the scenes of private life, being neither gossipy nor over-personalised, keep the dignity of the man—erring only slightly on the side of sentimentality. The Mask Theatre's revival is opportune, for the play was written in 1918 and aimed to show, in the author's own words, "the inspiring example of a man who handled war with nobility and imagination." Lincoln himself provides the only solid part so that the burden of the evening fell to Mr. Stephen Murray. After a rather shaky beginning, where he seemed to miss the dramatic force of his scenes, Mr. Murray settled down to a performance which caught something of the spirit of the character. He is helped by a realistic appearance, but handicapped by a grave monotony of intonation; if only he could extend his vocal range it would add a great deal to his performance. Perhaps the long supporting cast will settle into their parts as the run proceeds; on the first night they were for the most part, frankly, rather more of a hindrance than a help to Mr. Murray. An ingenious design solved the problem of the shifting scenes with tact and charm.

"For Freedom," at the Gaumont
"Invisible Stripes," at the Warner
"Slightly Honourable," at the London Pavilion

British propaganda films improve apace: *For Freedom*, an account of the battle of the River Plate and the rescue of the prisoners from the *Altmark*, is a considerable improvement on *The Lion Has Wings* and is, within limits, an entertaining, exciting, and inspiring picture. The battle sequences are tacked on to a sketchy story of a London newsreel office which provides the opportunity for a well-selected if familiar series of newsreel shots summarising events from before Munich up to the time of the battle. The battle itself is described in thrilling and lucid detail with the aid of models, actual ships, and members of the crews who took part in the battle. The chief merits of the film lie in its restraint, its sound statement of the British case, an excellent if simple speech on internationalism, and its lack of Blimpish dialogue. The officers and crew, who play quite important parts, are remarkably natural, and Maurice Elvey, the director, has made a quite solid propaganda brick with comparatively little straw.

It is high time that the story of the hardships of the ex-convict on parole were finally shelved, but here it is again in all its dusty worn out trappings under the title *Invisible Stripes*. George Raft and Humphrey Bogart do their well-known victim of the system and born villain acts, and Flora Robson is a conventionally agonised mother.

Slightly Honourable attempts to transpose the technique of the tough American novel to the medium of the screen. Amidst gay badinage, wise-cracks and shouts of laughter, people are stabbed to death, socked in the puss, and generally mutilated—women not excepted. The cracks are so wise that it is impossible to follow the plot, and it is interesting to note that during this cinematic blood bath, isolationist and anti-war sentiments are inserted.

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THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 20th—
Civil Liberties Week-end Conference on "The Press, Civil Servants and Trade Unions in Wartime." Francis Williams, L. C. White and W. J. R. Squance; Arnold House Hotel, Brighton.

SUNDAY, April 21st—
Prof. G. W. Keeton: "Federalism in Our Time?" Conway Hall, 11. Concert, The Hirsch String Quartet, 6.30.

MONDAY, April 22nd—
Miss E. H. Ramsden: "Art To-day—a Method of Approach," Morley College, 7.30.
H. S. L. Polak: "India and the Future," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 7.45.

TUESDAY, April 23rd—
A. C. Richmond: "Land Settlement," Housing Centre, 1.
Maurice Rowntree: "The Task Before Us," Friends House, 1.20.
Karl Mannheim: "Social Control and Authority," I.S.T.D., 8 Portman Street, 6.30. And on April 30th.
Kingsley Martin: "Methods of Propaganda, 26 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1., 8.
Opening of Shakespeare Festival, Stratford-on-Avon.
"The Women," Strand.

WEDNESDAY, April 24th—
H.E. the Chinese Ambassador: "China After Three Years' Invasion," National Portrait Gallery, 5.30.
E. F. M. Durbin: "New Light on Old Problems," Morley College, 7.30.
Recital by Richard Tauber, with Joan Hammond and Noel Mewton-Wood, in aid of Red Cross and St. John Fund, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

THURSDAY, April 25th—
Tea-time Concert by Rosé Quartet, Queen Mary Hall, 5.30.
Lord Lytton: "The International Situation and the League of Nations," Caxton Hall, 6.30.
A. N. Silver: "The War To-day," 2 Keats Grove, N.W.3, 7.45
London Philharmonic Orchestra Concert for Polish Relief Fund, Queen's Hall, 8.
Irmgard Litten: "So hasst Hitler," Conway Hall, 8. Adm. 6*d*.

FRIDAY, April 26th—
Graham Pollard: "The History of the Newspaper," Birkbeck College, 5.30.

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Many a "New Statesman" reader has asked this question and upon enquiry has been happy to find that "Keesing's" is just what he or she has long been looking for—a "living" work of reference on current events, always up to date, which follows actual developments as swiftly as a newspaper and yet employs the methods of impartial and scholarly research.

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Correspondence

PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATION

SIR,—In answer to R. N. Haward's letter of April 13th we should like to suggest certain practical considerations which have contributed to the failure of progressive movements in recent years.

(1) They have been top-heavy; have been directed too much from London and a few urban centres; have tended to form central organisations out of proportion to their numerical following in the country; have depended too much for propaganda on spasmodic nation-wide appeals. Mr. Haward's phrase "call a conference or run a campaign" unconsciously reflects this over-centralised habit of mind.

(2) The Communist Party almost alone has realised the importance of unremitting political *education* among members and sympathisers as the essential means of keeping local groups together, as also of equipping them for propaganda among the unconverted.

(3) As pointed out in the letter of "Middle Class," there has been a great increase of pressure from employers upon black-coated workers, and on manual workers outside industrial areas, to prevent political independence and activity. Particularly in country districts and small towns victimisation has been made easier by the normal expectation that *public* activities are the only means of being politically alive and useful.

The war has so far produced two new national movements—Federal Union and "Our Struggle," now developing out of Acland's book. We believe that if either is to have the slightest hope of success it must be solidly built on local groups deriving their vitality from local people without looking to London for leadership; that its main immediate aim must be political, economic and moral education in small groups which should run personal propaganda concurrently. Such groups already exist in our own district and are welcomed by people of many kinds, including members of the local Labour Party.

The "lack of means" deplored by Mr. Haward is merely a symptom of lack of conviction and agreement. These can be supplied only by an increase in (1) the information and resulting confidence of each individual; (2) the sense of friendship and solidarity within the group. No conceivable framework of "national organisation," however imposing, can either be a substitute for these two things or supply them; nor, without them, would it be properly democratic. One of the most powerful causes of the present apathy and bewilderment is the belief that leaders and central organisations let the ordinary man down: this point is very properly stressed in the *Manifesto of the Ordinary Man*, just published (centrally!), from 10 Gerald Road, S.W.1. This Manifesto, supplemented, perhaps, by Streit's *Illustrative Constitution* for F.U. and/or Wells's *Rights of Man* should form an excellent basis for the early discussions of such groups as we have been describing. The invitations to early meetings should not, of course, be confined to old soldiers in "the stage army of the good." At present thousands of people who have had no previous political convictions of any kind are beginning, under pressure of events, to grope after "progressive" ideas. They and others must be prepared, by working out the political implications of their vague desires, to anticipate the future and stop the present rot of acquiescence.

MADELINE HOUSE
HAROLD WARBEY

Old Forge, Horney Common, Uckfield.

PITY THE POOR PINKS

SIR,—Philip Toynbee's letter of March 16th was, in a manner, a challenge to the pinks to consider their position. A pink is a left-winger who does not go the whole hog. The term is relative, because I, for instance, am only a pink in politics, but wholly red in education. Broadly speaking we middle-class pinks have a hearty hate of civilisation as run by capitalism and the old school tie; we have a sincere belief in liberty and freedom and true democracy. Whether our leftism is neurotic or not is a question, one answer to which was suggested by a psycho-analyst friend who remarked that a middle-class Communist must be a neurotic. There may be something in the idea, for the leftism of Pollitt or Gallacher is founded on the class struggle; they were manual workers and to them class is a grim reality. Middle-class leftism has been nearer to Liberalism than to Communism.

True we have had a strong emotional feeling about Russia; we have praised it, have grounded our hopes for the future on Russia's

new civilisation. But here again we have differed from the genuine red. He accepts everything that Russia does, without question; he toes the party line. He believes in the divine right of Communism, while the middle-class pink cannot subscribe to a divine right of anything. And here it is that we are in a cleft stick. We hate all that Chamberlainism stands for, and we cannot accept all that Stalinism stands for. With all its shortcomings (from the pink point of view) Russia is the hope of the future, for it is a workers' state without profit or exploitation. Our cleft stick is this . . . if we turn against Russia we can only turn to diehardism, for to-day there are no greys, only black and white, or at least blue and red.

A thousand signposts have pointed to a war against Russia. If we oppose it we are automatically with those who toe the party line, and if we support it we are with the Chamberlains and Duff Coopers, with imperialism and the growth of Fascism at home. The Communists have no difficulty about the matter. Their contention is something like this: Intelligentsia leftism is only talk; it did nothing for democratic Spain. By invading Finland Russia showed this brand of leftism up, showed that it was a pink futility, worth nothing in the class war and the revolution. It proved conclusively that the pinks have for the most part been unconsciously on the other side.

The present behaviour of some Labour Leaders suggests that the last sentence is true. It is true that the Finland business eliminated the doctrinaire Socialist and the reformist. There is no place for halfway men now. The present war is not primarily a war between two imperialisms; behind it all is the war between classes, and we are faced with the alternatives—Communism or Fascism. But the pinks can subscribe to neither. They are bad group people; they cannot lose themselves in a cause. At heart they are individualists: they hate mass production of ideas. Yet it would be wrong to say that their leftism is purely intellectual. The intellect has very little to do with the matter; politics in the middle class are primarily emotional. Hearts, not heads, decide the issue. I presume that Winston Churchill is up to my intellectual standard, yet his judgment on—say—Pritt's *Must the War Spread* would be entirely different from mine. Each would read it with a preoccupied bias.

The politically pink are not selfish in their aims. Most of us have a comparatively easy time under Capitalism. Under the present system I am free to run my school as I please. I live by profit, and although far from being rich, I can buy the lesser luxuries. Under Communism I don't suppose I should have a similar freedom to experiment. The sad fact is that we pinks really want all the benefits of Socialism and Capitalism at the same time. I want to see the workers own the factories, but I don't want any Commissar to tell me how to run my school, which of course is rank individualism.

Where then do we fit in? Are we to stand on the pavement and watch the mass movements pass along with banners singing *Rule Britannia* or *The Red Flag?* Or shall we say: We are washouts as revolutionaries: let us retire from the left wing. We have no organised army; we have no flags, no leaders, no definite programme. Indeed there is much to be said for our retiring into oblivion. On the other hand, the class war is not the whole story, nor is Communism. It has attempted with much success to solve the hunger (economic) instinct, but it has not solved the other primary instinct—sex, and this includes art and all things of the spirit. It is true that we expect too much from Russia; we want to see her solve in twenty-three years what other systems haven't solved in two thousand.

Well, what are we to do? As the war goes on the screw will tighten, and the pinks will be classed as dangerous enemies of the State. In wartime any good cream is a red. What when our liberties begin to be whittled away? I get three morning papers—*Telegraph, News Chronicle, Daily Worker*. If the *Worker* were to be suppressed my opportunity of getting at the truth would be docked by one-third . . . a real red would say by two-thirds. What if freedom of pen and tongue go the way of their fellows over the Channel? We pinks cannot go in for underground work because we are mostly timid folks, frightfully brave morally, but cowards physically (but perhaps I only speak for myself). But the fact remains that underground work implies passion, ultimately the courage to die for a cause. Few if any pinks would ever die for any cause.

Shall we form a party? No, definitely no. Things have become too raw, too primitive: it is either—or, and no large party can be formed round movements like Douglas Credit Reform or Federal Union (pax to my friend Curry). We cannot be Communists and we cannot be Fascists. The Fascists hate us: the Communists despise us. Yet, you know we have some importance. I like to think, perhaps fatuously, that although only a pink I am ahead of the real reds in educational theory. I admire Harry Pollitt a lot, but I shouldn't go out of my way to learn from him about my job. In Beatrice King's book on Soviet education I thought the chapter on sex education was a tale of ignorance, but to say so means being a Trotskyist. My Communist friends scorn my suggestion that in any scheme a Trotsky is a psychological necessity if there is to be growth.

I find that if I write even the smallest criticism of Russia I develop a bad conscience, especially at this time when all sorts of pinks are slinging mud at that country. Yet my mud is only, shall I say, 20 per cent. mud; it isn't the sticky stuff I should like to throw at our class rulers. It may not be mud at all; I may simply be throwing dust in my own eyes. I allay my conscience a little with the thought that if I am only 80 per cent. with the reds I am no percentage at all with the diehards (i.e., those who like to live soft).

Our testing time is at hand. If in their madness our class rulers add 180 million Russians to our enemies, we pinks will either have to be silent or go a deeper shade, for then the war will be the long-expected straight one between the haves and the have nots. In the ensuing hell pink will be a most unfashionable colour in a world dyed very, very red. We stand at the cross roads. Pinkism has its merits, but for this generation it is to be dead: it was too tender a plant to survive in a bloody world. Time will soon force an answer on us, an answer to the question: What are we poor pinks to do?

A. S. NEILL

COMMUNIST DILEMMA

SIR,—I suggest that if Mr. Philip Toynbee (and other thoughtful men in his position) carefully ask themselves why they were forced to break with the Communist Party, they will see that it is because the Party's philosophy has a wrong view of human nature. In some respects this view is optimistic and unrealistic. It supposes that some men (the Party Chiefs in Moscow) are wise and trustworthy enough to initiate and direct an exceedingly prolonged political adventure, in which thousands of lives (perhaps even a

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PETER DAVIES

generation or two) will be penalised or sacrificed for the sake of a goal which they have never been asked to understand. It supposes that some men (the Communist Government of this country) are disinterested enough to surrender their power voluntarily when that goal is reached. It supposes that men in general can reach a condition in which perfect justice prevails without the instruments of the state (for are not all the great social evils due simply to the economic evils of capitalism?). Again, in other respects, the Communist view of man is too pessimistic. It dismisses the common man's devotion to his country and his religion as things without any real value to himself or to anybody: nothing is counted to him for righteousness but his class and party loyalty. Men cannot be *understood* in these terms—measured by economic and political standards only. Mr. Toynbee can see no alternative to the Communist Party. Good! For it pretends to offer what no political party can ever offer: a complete account of man. Let those who see this, however dimly, make it their business to study man in his fullness; and especially, and in the most sympathetic and imaginative way, those aspects of mankind which the Party so easily disposes of—family and social life, love of tradition and place, love of those religious doctrines and consolations whose history goes back far beyond the oldest of the positive cults. And let those of us who (for reasons creditable or otherwise) have never accepted this shallow philosophy, not be afraid to say where and why we disagree with it. I do not mean that we should necessarily make public attacks upon the Party—still less that we should communicate our views to the police! I mean that we should not, for any strategic reasons, conceal those convictions which any potentially honest thinker has a right to hear and to consider.

KARL BRITTON

University College of Swansea.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL PROBLEM

SIR,—Molly Fordham's problem seems to me to resolve itself thus: Does she want her child to become a citizen of Great Britain, or does she want him brought up in ignorance of, and antagonistic to, 90 per cent. of its fellow countrymen? It is obvious she cannot have the best of both worlds. I was once talking to a parent who was sending his son to a public school because, as he said, if you want to *get* anywhere a public school education is necessary. To me it is an astonishing fact that an English *gentleman*, while he would scorn to give his son an undue advantage in the school 100 yards, does not hesitate to insist on an unfair advantage for him in the more important race of life—the Public School label. In my own case I had no hesitation in sending my child to the elementary school and neither she nor I have ever regretted it. It is on record that Arnold of Rugby, said "Rather than have physical science as the principal thing in my sons mind, I would gladly have him think that the sun went round the earth and that the stars were so many spangles in the bright blue firmament."

Here you have the result of studying in "cloister time" among grey buildings softened with the gold of years with the ghosts of a thousand dead scholars walking with you—to quote Mrs. Fordham. Pretty enough—but is it education? It is not the kind of education that is going to keep this country's place in the world. The mess that we are in at the present moment is probably due to the fact that our men of science are efficient but are under the orders of people educated along Arnold's lines. All "sweetness and light." Refuse to people our public schools with your sons and the ruling class will have to devise some sort of national education. When that happens, you may be sure that that system will be one upon which more care is bestowed than is the case at present. Those "damned" board schools were so designated by men who never intended their sons to go there.

The Outlook, Above Town, Dartmouth.

ARTHUR E. BRAGG

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author of "Ideology and Utopia"

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KEGAN PAUL

THE N.S. AND N. IN FRANCE

SIR,—My letter in your issue of the 6th inst. suggesting that readers should send their used copy of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION each week to a man, or officer in France has had an astonishing response. I have a large number of offers, but so far very few suggested names or recipients have come to hand. So I venture to ask for readers to suggest ways and means of making this opportunity known to men at the front who are likely to be interested in it. It occurs to me that padres and officers who know the personal tastes of their men might help in the matter.

Addresses should be given in block letters.

Wayside, Sychnant Pass Road, Conway, N. Wales.

J. ARTHUR LEONARD

THE KEYNES PLAN

SIR,—What should be the attitude of the Labour movement to the question of paying for the war? How far must the cost be met by a lowering of working-class standards?

War means the expenditure of a vast amount of labour on objects which do nothing to increase the nation's stock of consumable goods. Since the Government's demands are certain to exceed any realisable expansion in total production, this means that the nation as a whole, while working harder, must eat less. Therefore, if inroads on the workers' standard of life are to be kept to a minimum, expenditure on luxuries by the better-off must not merely be curtailed, it must be abolished.

Some reduction in working-class consumption will doubtless still be necessary. It is for the workers themselves to decide how much victory is worth to them, in terms of tightening the belt. They are rightly suspicious of schemes which offer them for present sacrifice a somewhat doubtful promise of compensation hereafter, and concentrate their attention on the present effects of the war on their lives. "Deferred pay" has small attractions for them, as they know they must themselves labour to produce the values out of which the deferred payments are to be made. At the same time, they have a right to demand that the wealthy shall not, by lending their surplus to the State, acquire additional rights over the fruits of the workers' labour after the war.

The Labour movement should therefore base its policy on two quite simple principles: that no one should increase his private wealth as a result of the war; and that no one should live in luxury while the workers tighten their belts.

In financial terms this means: (1) appropriation by the Government, without compensation, of all undistributed profits accumulated during the war; (2) appropriation for the duration of the war of all private unearned income, less a maintenance allowance for those without other resources; (3) increase of income tax on earned income to the point where no individual disposes of more than the earnings of a skilled industrial worker; (4) no internal loans for war purposes. Only such demands,

backed by the full political and industrial strength of Labour, can ensure real equality of sacrifice and prevent the exploitation of war for private profit.

If the patriotism of the rich or the possibilities of capitalist organisation are unequal to the strain of such a programme, the workers can justifiably conclude that a large part of the sacrifices now demanded of them is not for the purpose of defeating Hitler and saving freedom and democracy, but for the preservation of the profit system in Britain. For this end they may, and if they are wise they will, decline to sacrifice a single square meal—let alone the lives of their sons. ARTHUR HUGHES

London, W.C.1.

PROBLEMS OF THE RICH

SIR,—There is a lot of glib talk just now (started, probably, by Sir John Simon in his Budget Speech) about the rich people who have to pay 17*s.* in the pound in Income Tax and Surtax, and numbers of less rich people, like your correspondent "Not a Surtax Payer," sympathise with them in their misfortune. It may therefore be a real comfort to these latter to know that nobody pays 17*s.* in the pound. It is true that a person with an income of £30,001 a year pays 17*s.* on the last £1, but on his whole income the rate averages about 14*s.*; quite a lot, I admit, but leaving him about double what his sympathisers seem to think. And £6,000 a year, free of tax, is quite a good income in wartime. A. F. S.

TWO WORDSWORTH INCIDENTS

SIR,—I am quite sure that the two following Wordsworth incidents have never appeared in print, and I think both are worth the telling. In my father's (late Dean of Westminster) first Long Vacation at Oxford about 1840, he was invited to visit the Arnolds at Foxhowe, their holiday house in the Lake Country. My father had been a prominent member of Arnold's Sixth at Rugby and was on familiar terms with the family. When he arrived at Foxhowe from the south (by coach, I think), on a fine summer afternoon, the family, including the Doctor, had not returned from some afternoon outing. While their guest was waiting in the drawing-room which overlooked the garden, an elderly man, "looking like a farmer," crossed the lawn, and coming to the open window, inquired if Dr. Arnold were at home, and hearing he was not retraced his steps. On the family's return, my father mentioned the fact of the visitor and as a young Oxonian, and ardent Wordsworthian was thrilled to hear that this was the great man himself. In hearty but no doubt respectful terms, he proceeded to congratulate his revered chief on enjoying the privileges of neighbourship and intercourse with the poet. To this the Doctor made no immediate answer, and my father began to wonder whether he could have made a *faux pas* of some sort. After a long pause, however, the Doctor made his reply in no undecided tone. It was just a long, deep groan. And that was all!

Dr. Arnold was very busy at that period during his holidays with his famous *History of Rome*. Nothing further, at any rate, will be needed here.

Here is the second incident.

Some forty years ago, I had as a neighbour in the country an elderly retired Indian Chaplain, who had had a curious experience with Wordsworth in his youth. It was about 1850, as a Divinity student at the old St. Bee's College, he bethought him one fine summer day of walking over to Rydal, some dozen miles distant, and having a look at the haunts of the, by that time, famous poet. It was no poetic urge, I would guarantee, without my friend's assurance that prompted the expedition, but mere friendly curiosity to see the so-much-talked-of spot. On arrival he was seated on a bench outside the local pub, eating his sandwich lunch with intentions of a glass of beer to follow. A rather strange-looking man, but obviously a gentleman, addressed him, and exacted the fact, that he was a St. Bee's student, and was attracted hither by curiosity to see Wordsworth's house and surroundings.

This very forthcoming stranger asked my friend to have a drink, which only anticipated his own intention. When I say that this turned out to be no less a person than Hartley Coleridge, it will be guessed that my friend paid for the drinks, and an extra one, at that! Hartley then told him he would take him to the poet's house himself, which he did, and what is more, took him in and introduced him to Wordsworth as a young student who had walked all the way from St. Bee's to look at Rydal Mount. The great man was most amiable, set him down in a chair, and presently took down a volume from the shelf, and began reading various extracts from his poems to the astonished student. The latter felt embarrassed, having no poetic instincts, and was even getting bored when the poet showed no sign of stopping, besides remembering his long walk home. A. G. BRADLEY

Egerton Road, Bexhill-on-Sea.

BRITISH ART

SIR,—May I be allowed to offer two criticisms of Mr. Clive Bell's notice of the present exhibition of British art at the National Gallery, that appeared in your issue of April 12th?

In the first place, surely his description of the tradition in English painting at the beginning of the nineteenth century is wanting in precision? As its "masters," he brackets together Gainsborough and Constable, though the former died in 1788. If this should be interpreted as referring to Gainsborough's influence on the painters of Constable's generation, Wilson and J. R. Cozens should be included as at least equally important. And why deny to Girtin and Turner, Constable's esteemed contemporaries, their share in upholding the tradition?

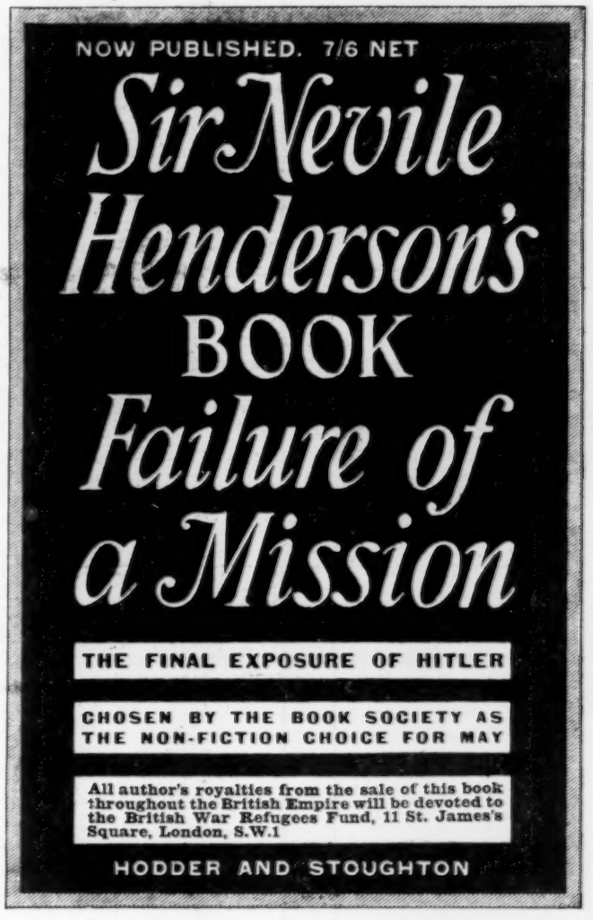
There I cannot but dissent from Mr. Bell's description of the part played by the Pre-Raphaelites. The Brotherhood, founded in 1848, when the oldest of its members was 21, did nothing artistically that was very new, they were only continuing a tendency that had long been apparent in English art, and may be seen in the work of such artists as Wilkie (b. 1785), Mulready (b. 1786), and Madise (b. 1806). It would be juster to ascribe the alienation of British taste in the nineteenth century from the art of France (which is, I suppose, what Mr. Bell means by "the European movement") to this established tendency, with its accompanying economic and political circumstances, than to the single phenomenon of the Pre-Raphaelite group of painters.

King's College, Cambridge. J. W. GOODISON

LLEWELYN POWYS

SIR,—I am collecting the letters of Llewelyn Powys with a view to their publication and would be exceedingly obliged if anyone possessing letters from him would communicate with me at the address below. ALYSE GREGORY

Yew Tree, Aldbourne,
Mar borough, Wiltshire.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HODDER AND STOUGHTON

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

AGNES STRICKLAND, the most popular biographer of her time, is an almost forgotten figure. In writing her life (*Agnes Strickland*, Chatto and Windus, 16*s*.), Dame Una Pope-Hennessy has eked out the sparse material with considerable taste, and we never have to endure the imaginative flights that pad so many biographies to the required thickness. But Miss Strickland's character does not appear very interesting, nor were the events of her life dramatic. Born in 1796, the daughter of a well-educated business man, she insinuated herself with her elder sister Eliza, into the profession of letters, writing articles, stories for children and poems (such bad poems), making friends with Letitia Landon and Colburn the publisher. Then Agnes had a wonderful idea. Would it not be more profitable to give up hack work and write the Lives of the Queens of England? Eliza agreed, and one sister began on Matilda of Flanders, the other on Adelicia of Louvain. The first volume appeared in 1840. The Misses Strickland were not scissors-and-paste writers. The Record Office did not exist, printed sources were few, and they studied manuscripts in the British Museum, in the muniment rooms of great houses and in foreign libraries; they obtained help from Michelet and Guizot; they travelled to the historic sites connected with their heroines. They seem to have been the first women to attempt serious history. They found a large public which shared this love of the picturesque past; for the Romantic Movement, and Scott in particular, had made fashionable abbeys, oubliettes, executioners, wimples, cloaks and swords—a taste reflected in the furniture, the architecture, and even the clothes of the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, the accession of Queen Victoria gave the biographies a topical interest. Probably the great success of the work—and it ran to twelve volumes—was largely due to its worst fault, a passionate partisanship. The Misses Strickland, like contemporary novelists, wrote in terms of heroines and villains. This is specially apparent in the later volumes, in which, as sentimental Cavaliers and Jacobites, they found nothing too good to say of James II's mother and wife, nothing too bad to say of his daughters and nephew. Their prejudices were communicated to successive generations through governesses and girls' schools, and there must be many ladies still alive who owe their Jacobite sympathies to Agnes and Eliza Strickland. Their style is undistinguished, their understanding of general movements feeble, and the virtue of their biographies lies in the mass of detail, and particularly in the many letters they reproduce. Eliza, the better writer of the two, was shy, and the name of Agnes appeared alone on the title-page. Queen Victoria alone seems to have spotted that the Lives were written by two different pens—a surprising instance of her acumen. Agnes had a conspicuous gift for making friends: she would go to a great house to study manuscripts or portraits, and the noble owner would usually succumb to her charm—a charm that is a little difficult for us to understand. In her photographs she emerges as a considerable tartar, and in conversation she was as incessant as Macaulay. But she had a zest for social life, reflected in her fondness for fine clothes, and she was "untiring in her will to please." When Queen Anne was finished (prudently she did not embark upon the domestic history of the Hanoverians) there were the Queens of Scotland, the Bachelor Kings of England, the Tudor and Stuart Princesses and even the Seven Bishops. At the age of seventy-three this indefatigable lady went to Holland to collect material for the life of William III's mother, and she died at the age of seventy-eight, dignified, orderly and correct.

Unlike many biographers, Dame Una has not fallen in love with her subject. Indeed, I suspect that the more she learnt about Agnes Strickland, the less she cared for her. But her book is just and never malicious. "Miss Strickland's personal life," she concludes, "reflects the values of her time better, it seems to me, than that of any Victorian with whose life I have become intimately concerned." She was a snobbish Tory, devoted to picturesque customs, indifferent except for occasional charities to social injustices, detesting Chartism and, of course, Republicanism. She refused to sign a petition supporting a Married Women's Property Act, seeing no way to remedy the wrong except "to ask God to regenerate the hearts of wicked men." For a Victorian maiden lady she was not prudish, but she naturally dodged the more unpleasant aspects of her theme when writing, for instance, about Edward II, James I and "Monsieur."

The principal interest of Dame Una's book is to be found in the details of Victorian life: the willow made by Paxton of copper that began to weep water when one sat under it; the special cart that met guests at the station to transport their crinolines; the crowd outside St. George's, Hanover Square, shouting "Stumble, bride, stumble"—a superstition said to be derived from the Romans! When staying at Althorp, Miss Strickland was taken by Lord Spencer to visit the Northampton lunatic asylum, where John Clare had been immured for twenty years. He gave her one of his poems:

> "I am glad you can amuse yourself by writing."
> "I can't do it, they pick my brains out," he retorted gloomily.
> She asked what he meant, and he obliged with an insane tirade.
> "Why, they have cut off my head and picked out all the letters in the alphabet, all the vowels and consonants and brought them out through my ears; and they want me to write poetry! I can't do it."

Dame Una has made one discovery which must interest all amateurs of Victoriana. In 1840 Miss Strickland brought out a book called *Queen Victoria from Her Birth to Her Bridal*, which was appropriately full of unqualified praise. But the young Queen disapproved, marked various inaccuracies in the margin, and had these copied and sent to the unfortunate authoress. Miss Strickland had attributed to her an early acquaintance with her mother's native tongue. "Not true," wrote the Queen, "never spoke German till 39. Not allowed." Again she had *never* commenced Greek, or studied mathematics. She had *not* been overpowered by the intensity of her feelings when the Archbishop announced to her that she was Queen, nor had she been tired after her Coronation. (This is an interesting contrast to the self-pity that later became a malady.) Worst of all was Miss Strickland's suggestion that the Queen had asked her mother's sanction for her engagement to Prince Albert: "Never," the Queen wrote, "the Dcss. of K. *never* knew anything of it untill (*sic*) the Queen told it her a few days before the Prince went." Another remark comprehensibly exciting a royal frown was that the Prince was "an *accomplished* wooer." The Queen wrote in the margin "*false*."

Miss Strickland naturally disliked Macaulay as a Whig. When they found themselves side by side at a dinner-party, they quickly quarrelled, about James II and William III. Then Macaulay, no doubt to change the conversation, "began to discuss the looks of a young man sitting opposite; he was certainly too good-looking to be intelligent. Agnes snapped back at him that it was no doubt a consolation for ugly men to think handsome men brainless." Macaulay presumably was content to think that brainy women were sometimes neither handsome nor well-bred.

Dame Una attributes to Macaulay, on internal evidence, an article on *The Queens* in the Edinburgh Review. Being a Macaulay enthusiast, I took the trouble to look up this article (a good deal of trouble because Dame Una attributes it to July, 1847, whereas it appeared in April, 1849), and I think the attribution improbable. There are touches worthy of Macaulay, and I think that he may have contributed some of the ammunition, but that the writing is too clumsy to be his. It must be remembered that a bow-wow, cocksure style, like Macaulay's, but not nearly so good, was the common property of Jeffrey, Brougham and a number of contemporary reviewers. I think this article came from the same hand as the review of Macaulay's History in the following number.

Dame Una's biography must have entailed a great deal of work, and will give a great deal of pleasure to those with a taste for Victorian small beer. Let me give one more extract, from which readers can judge whether or not it is a book for them. Lady Augusta Bruce, Lady-in-Waiting first to the Duchess of Kent, then to the Queen, and wife to Dean Stanley, is in my opinion the Perfect Victorian. (Her published correspondence is most recommendable.) Miss Strickland wrote to her, after the Duchess's death, to condole and, simultaneously, to ask what jewellery would be correct at the next Drawing-Room, with the Court in mourning. Here is Lady Augusta's reply:

> What you say of my late beloved mistress is very precious to me. It is soothing to see how Her virtues were appreciated and Her character understood though Her life was so retired and Her character so modest and self-forgetting; it is soothing also to see to what an extent the Queen's grief is entered into. I must not allow myself to say more for I am anxious not to lose a moment in saying that I believe pearls are to be worn—everyone is agreed upon diamonds, but there is not the same unanimity on the subject of pearls. I think *you are quite safe* in wearing them, but if you have *jet*, does not that look very well?

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AMBASSADOR AT BERLIN

Failure of a Mission. By SIR NEVILE HENDERSON. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 7s. 6d.

Britain has had few good ambassadors in Germany. Sir Robert Morier, from minor posts at German courts, understood the significance of Bismarck; Lord D'Abernon and Sir Horace Rumbold, after the last war, were not content to hob-nob with important personages, but took the trouble to study Germany's social structure and mental evolution. Sir Nevile Henderson made no such attempt. He was summoned from Buenos Aires in 1937 by Mr. Baldwin and accepted the Berlin mission, in the belief, as he tells us, that he had "been specially selected by Providence" for the purpose of helping to preserve the peace of the world. Since Germany was a dictatorship this seemed to mean establishing the most friendly relations possible with the Nazi leaders. He was already known to be favourable to the Nazi regime and that, as he explains fairly enough, was an advantage. "An official representative abroad cannot really serve his own country to the best purpose if he is known to be hostile to the country in which he resides." But he regarded his mission largely as a social one. He thinks it worth while in this account of his tragic period in Germany to discuss his anxiety about whether or not he would be invited to meet an old acquaintance, King Alexander of Yugoslavia, when he visited Berlin; and he expresses gratitude to Göring for arranging a meeting over a cup of tea.

Sir Nevile honestly admits his admiration for some aspects of the Nazi regime; it is characteristic that he defends the Nazi Labour Camps, without apparently knowing anything of them first hand. He knew that fanatics like Himmler and Ribbentrop were in any case enemies, but he found it easy to get on good terms with gentlemanly people like Baron Von Neurath and Blomberg. It is an odd commentary on his judgment that he greatly admires leading Nazis like Göring, Hierl, head of the Labour Service and Dr. Gurtner, the shady lawyer who, as Minister of Justice, has abolished the last vestiges of legal principle in Germany. Of them he says that "most of us would have been proud to do for our own country what these and others like them did for theirs." His best friend was Göring. Göring took the trouble consistently to warn him of Hitler's plans; Göring was quite clear about Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and on each occasion Sir Nevile's reply appears, in effect, to have been that Britain would not object to any of these countries coming under German domination provided the operation were done with a certain decency. He describes at some length shooting the stag at the Field-Marshal's famous hunting lodge at Rominten. "There is no rabid nationalism in sport, nor Socialism either, in the midst of unspoilt Nature, where all men are equal."

On the way from Buenos Aires Sir Nevile read *Mein Kampf*. It struck him as a remarkable production "on the part of a man whose education and political experience appeared to have been as slight, on his own showing, as Herr Hitler's." Sir Nevile's own conclusion about National Socialism is that, apart from the Leader principle, which is derived from Fascism, it is "based entirely on the old Prussian theory of service to the State and obedience to its command as preached in the writings of its apostle, Immanuel Kant." Poor Immanuel Kant, author of Perpetual Peace, the German philosopher of the French Revolution and exponent of that most individualistic of doctrines, the categorical imperative! It takes a British Ambassador to Berlin (in a book vetted by the Foreign Office) to saddle you with this strange inheritance! The voyage from Buenos Aires was not long enough to read *Mein Kampf* and also to discover the difference between Kant and Hegel.

So far it may seem as if the book were not very good propaganda for Britain, but from the point of view of the British public at least it has one great merit. It shows without a shadow of doubt that Hitler wanted war and that the British Government would have gone to almost any lengths to avoid it. Sir Nevile's account of the official negotiations before the attack on Poland is a highly illuminating narrative, which confirms in detail the impression given by the White Paper. He explains that Hitler felt little triumph over Munich, but rather disappointment that he had not blooded his army in Czechoslovakia. For the first time the Führer "had failed to obey his Voice." He even complained that Mr. Chamberlain was the first man to whom he had ever made concessions. Up to the last moment Sir Nevile struggled to avert war in 1939 by a similar compromise. Göring had used all his influence to stop Hitler marching in September, 1938, and Sir Nevile remarks that if he had as much moral as he had physical courage, he would have repeated his peaceful intervention on the eve of the war with Poland.

There is hardly a reference to Russia in Sir Nevile Henderson's account of the Czech crisis, though in approving of the Italian suggestion of a Four Power Conference instead of the Runciman Mission he remarks that "it would be difficult to exclude other Powers in such a Conference." He tells us that he had no serious hope of success when the British mission went to Russia after the guarantee had been given to Poland. He does not consider how much history might have been altered if Russia's offer, immediately after the invasion of Prague, had been accepted. There is only one reference to Spain in the book and that is highly significant. Sir Nevile explains that Hitler did not believe that we should interfere in Czechoslovakia because we could not do so effectively, just as he himself would not interfere in Spain if France intervened on behalf of the Spanish Government. The comparison is interesting and, I believe, perfectly correct. Britain and France would have run no risk of general war if they had supported the democratic cause in Spain; the risk in Czechoslovakia was always real.

But the Spanish struggle was always mixed up with Communism in the minds of our rulers and they viewed the triumph of Fascism in Spain with equanimity. Nazi advances elsewhere they regarded with increasing misgiving and Sir Nevile gives a clear picture of their method of meeting Hitler's threats. He reports in succession that Austria, or Czechoslovakia or Poland is the next victim. Britain's response is not to attempt to dissuade Hitler from his objective but to induce him to obtain it by polite means. Sir Nevile does not seem to realise that to an Austrian or Czech the distinction between armed intervention or capture by diplomatic pressure has none of that importance which Whitehall attaches to it.

Sir Nevile describes discussions about the desirability of muzzling the British press to sweeten relations with Berlin, and although, according to his own analysis, no concessions to the Nazis would have in any way altered Hitler's plans, he complains that the Czechs "showed a fatal hesitation to appreciate facts," and he regards the behaviour of the Hacha Government in trying to put down revolt in Slovakia as a foolish provocation of Hitler. Sir

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Nevile's judgment of Nazi Germany was warped throughout by his terror and hatred of Bolshevism. He had none of that diplomatic realism that enabled M. Coulondre, the French Ambassador, to warn his Government as early as May in the clearest terms that there would be a German-Russian agreement if the democracies could not reach an understanding first. He remarks, "I never believed in any effective or altruistic assistance being offered by the Russians to the Poles." Effective assistance there could have been in the sense that Hitler was unwilling, as his treaty with Russia eventually showed, to embark on the incalculable and limitless adventure of war with Russia as well as with Britain and France, and as to "altruistic" assistance, whoever asked for or expected it? The basis for a treaty with Russia was our joint interest in preventing the triumph of Nazi Germany. The simple truth is that the appeasement policy was an effort to make an alliance between Britain and Germany and that it appeared almost to have succeeded on March 14th, 1939. The F.B.I. mission was in Berlin; Sir Samuel Hoare made his speech about disarmament and the coming Golden Age. That these men, Sir Nevile Henderson amongst them, should have hoped against hope that Hitler would not advance beyond the Sudeten frontier is credible; that they should have been outraged and astonished when Hitler broke his word is one of the curiosities of diplomatic history. Scarcely less curious, the men who made such gigantic blunders are still in power in Britain and still under the illusion that it is good propaganda to explain to the world that they were outwitted by the Nazis.

TOM PAINE

THE FENS

The Medieval Fenland. By H. C. DARBY. *Cambridge University Press.* 12s. 6d.

The Draining of the Fens. By H. C. DARBY. *Cambridge University Press.* 21s.

The motorist driving through the fenland to-day and seeing all round him fields brilliant with flowers (Wisbech is one of the best bulb-growing centres in England), or covered with corn or potatoes or sugar beet, small fruits or market garden crops, will find it hard to remember for how great a part of our history much of this prosperous country lay drowned. Only the sluggish cuts, the dykes and sluices and causeways and an occasional ruined mill remind him that the fen is the scene of one of man's most signal victories over nature.

It is true that the victory is never completely won, for nature is the only foe that never sleeps and never dies; take your eye off her for a moment and forest or jungle or flood have crept once more over the fields painfully snatched from them. A legacy of trouble remains after all the centuries spent in draining the fens. There is the wastage of the peat surface (ironically enough the result of successful drainage) which creates the need for increasingly powerful pumping units, which in their turn cause further wastage and so on *ad infinitum*. There is the need for constant care to prevent the banks from being weakened by seepage. And there is always the fear that a combination of adverse pressure and wind conditions with a high spring tide and heavy land floods will, on account of the shoals in the estuaries of the Great Ouse, the Nene and the Welland, produce more water than the outfalls will allow to escape. Then the danger that old Thomas Fuller described in the seventeenth century threatens once more. Down comes "the Bailiff of Bedford (so the country people commonly call the overflowing of the river Ouse), attended like a person of his quality with many servants (the accession of tributary brooks) and breaks down all their paper banks, as not water-shot-free."

Mr. Darby's two volumes cover both an illuminating description of fenland economy and an account of the whole process of drainage from the time of the Romans to the present day. He gives a salutary warning against overemphasising the consequences which followed from the peculiarity of the district. Clear distinction has to be made between the silt zone and the peat areas. In the later middle ages the silt land between the sea and the peat fen was among the most prosperous parts of England, a prosperity based on corn, cattle and sheep and still mirrored in the massive parish churches of the area. Even in the peat district there were upland tracts, islands in the fens on which the monastic chroniclers of the middle ages lavished their praise, for they were the sites of the great fenland abbeys, Ely "of fairest place," Ramsey "most beautiful vill," Crowland and Thorney, each "a very paradise." Obviously there was a great deal of perfectly normal agricultural activity, side by side with the fishing and fowling, peat digging and rush gathering of the fen itself; and the fen waterways were thronged with traffic.

Mr. Darby gives an account of the changes in this fenland economy, the growth of the normal at the expense of the peculiar activities, which came about as a result of drainage. In the middle ages reclamation was due to local enterprise, chiefly that of the fenland abbeys and their tenants and between the end of the eleventh and the early fourteenth centuries they accomplished a great deal. It was not, however, until the seventeenth century that the first large scale drainage project, the draining of the Bedford Level, was carried out. Mr. Darby describes the changing methods of drainage, the windmill, the steam engine and finally the centrifugal pump by which in 1851 the last of the great fenland lakes, Whittlesea Mere, was drained. The long-drawn battle had often to be waged against man as well as against nature. The fenmen rose when they saw their traditional occupations disappearing, and there were many like the outraged William Stowe, who when a pumping mill or "engine" was built in Holland in 1588, was overheard to say "that Mr. Carlton had set up certaine Guegawes in the countrey" (meaning the Ingens) and with all said, "Can I not finde a madd knave that will cutt one of them downe in a night?" But there were other opponents too. There was a flutter in Cambridge lest the Granta should dry up and the University be left without its provisions, which mainly came to it by water. "If our river had been taken away," wrote the Public Orator to Lord Chancellor Bacon in 1620, "who would visit Alma Mater when robbed of all its supplies?" And there were not wanting those who said that the whole project was against the Christian religion; "fens were made fens and must ever continue such."

Enough has been said to show what a good story Mr. Darby has told with a wealth of well-chosen illustration and lucid explanation. It is perhaps captious to say that he writes sometimes as a geographer rather than as an historian. His strength lies in his power of description, but he sometimes fails to answer, or indeed to ask, questions with which the economic historian would like him to deal. For instance, he describes the remarkable growth in the prosperity of the fenland between Domesday Book and the eve of the Hundred Years War, but he hardly explains it. It becomes

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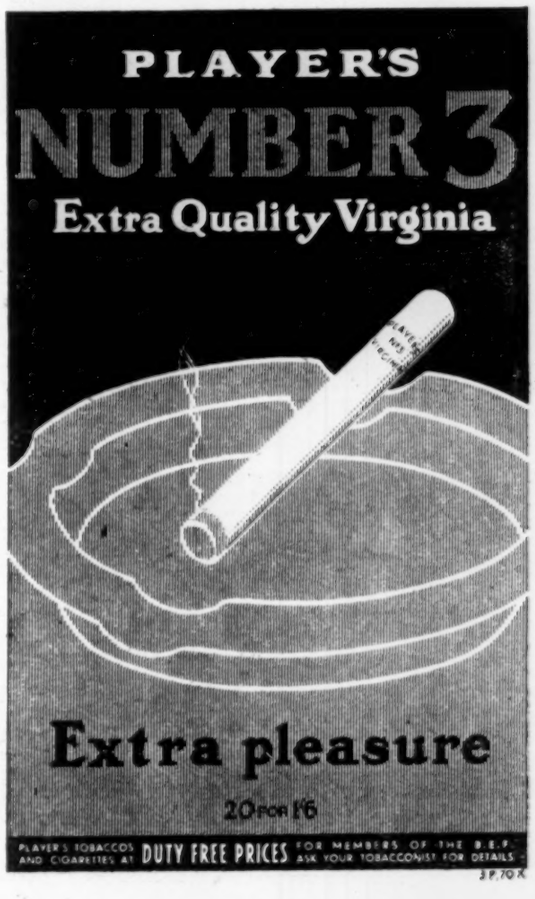
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much more illuminating when it is set against what we know of the great agricultural boom of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries; the reclamation of the fens was only part of a general movement of colonisation due to the rising population and rising prices of agrarian produce. Similarly the fifteenth century depression was general and was not a local phenomenon produced by floods. In the modern volume, too, there are questions which remain unanswered. Mr. Darby explains that lack of capital threw the business of reclamation into the hands of the "undertakers" and "adventurers" who are characteristic of the seventeenth century, but he does not attack the interesting problem of exactly how these great works were financed. On such questions as this much still remains to be done, but he has blazed a trail and has placed not only historians but all who are interested in the changing face of England in his debt for a fascinating and learned book.

EILEEN POWER

THE FASCIST'S PROGRESS

Gilles. By DRIEU LA ROCHELLE. *Gallimard.* 35 *Fr.*

Recipe for making hard-boiled Fascist: Take one disgruntled Narcissus, butter well, put in an urban pot, and allow to stew in own juice for twenty years. Now take a handful of miscellaneous women, reduce to a jelly and add to the pot. Furbish some stale ideas (having previously removed the kernels), half bake them, cover with a cloth steeped in misanthropy, and put on one side. Season the pot with artistic, political and journalistic spice (*no salt*, or the dish will be ruined). At the last moment add a clove of self-pity, pour in the half-baked ideas, and serve piping hot.

Such, ribaldly resumed, is the plot of M. Drieu La Rochelle's latest and most considerable novel. It is a very remarkable performance—the work of a man of great talent, intellect and sensibility, who has, nevertheless, allowed *Weltschmerz* to drive him to desperation. It is the work of a psychotic and, as in the case of Henri de Montherlant (with whose books this has more than a little in common), the conclusion is irresistible that *Gilles* is near-autobiography. Thus it has a quite special interest for the understanding of our stupid and brutal age.

The novel—a very long one—falls into three divisions. In the first we begin by discovering Gilles on leave from the front during the last war. Young, vital, and physically attractive, he is in a state of bitter aggressiveness against the civilian population, which issues in a spate of contemptuous promiscuities. Gradually the narrative centres down on to Gilles' relationship with a rich young Jewess, Miriam Falkenberg, whom he admires but (therefore) does not desire. An innocent, sheltered person, she is rapidly reduced by the resentful young gigolo to a state of masochistic prostration in which she will do anything he wants. Coveting her money, he becomes engaged to her, insults and humiliates her in every possible way, and eventually marries her, only to leave her almost at once. This distressing exhibition of moral ineptitude is treated with the utmost brilliance and penetration, only impaired by the author's apparent inability to distinguish love from amorousness. For the insistence on sexual prowess throughout the book ends by defeating itself: amorists (Casanova is of course the perfect example) never will realise how monotonously boring the description of their "successes" is to people who do not happen to share their neurosis. To which it may be added that only deeply unvirile men talk about virility.

Part II, *L'Elysée*, is by far the most amusing, as it is the most satirically valuable, section of the book. Here Gilles comes up against the activities of a gang of surrealists who are working on the vanity and weakness of the President's son, Paul Morel, to acquire certain letters and by publishing them to produce a scandal in which M. Morel will be politically discredited. The plot is a failure and Paul Morel, the boy, commits suicide. Surrealism has resulted in better literature than its adepts have themselves produced; the hollow pretensions, the pointless destructiveness and irresponsibility of these people have never been better shown up than in the picture of Caël and his disciples. The whole affair, with its obvious *clefs* and its sidelight on the unbelievable vehemence of feeling between rival intellectual sets in Paris, is drawn with a bitter violence that makes it horribly exciting, as well as uproariously comic.

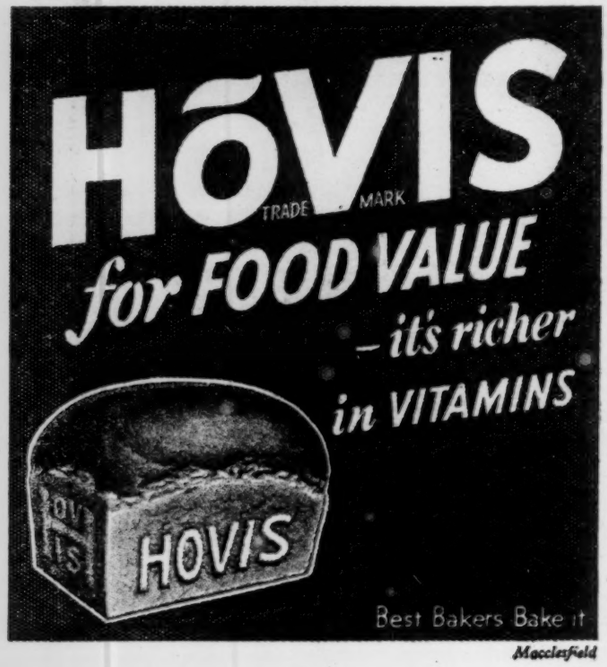
After this the book rather goes to pieces, because the chief character fails to develop in any sense. What he was in 1916 he remains, *a fortiori*, in 1937: an angry, inconsolable boy who has completely lost the self and cannot now recover it. To be sure, M. Drieu la Rochelle is superbly unaware of his hero's essential inadequacy; but the reader will realise it by finding the Gilles of Part III a humourless bore, the solemnity of whose conversion to Fascism (the author is, or was, a follower of Doriot) is not much relieved by an elaborate satire on contemporary journalism.

"*Il faut contre cette société constituer une force de combat, libre de toutes les vieilles doctrines, un corps franc,*" shouts Gilles; and later: "*Les barrières seront à jamais rompues entre la droite et la gauche, et des flots de vie se précipiteront en tout sens.*" And so on. . . This is mere verbigeration. So what? one would like to ask the eternal *mauvais coucheurs* who are at present purveying this kind of hot air. But one would ask in vain, for such men never know what life is about: Gilles acts compulsively and must be dismissed as a hopeless case. The only real difference between him and the surrealist Caël is that whereas the former is prepared to face the results of violence, the latter is not.

One's worst fears are realised in an epilogue. After a temporary eclipse, during which the scene shifts to Majorca, where some new and not very interesting characters are introduced, Gilles re-emerges fighting for the cause of General Franco. There we leave him babbling of "*le Christianisme Viril du Moyen Âge.*" Revolver on hip, he has recovered his self of 1917 and is happy again in the only kind of world—that of strife, pain and death—in which such men can find any sort of satisfaction.

Throughout the book the author, speaking ventriloquially, abuses Rationalism as distinct from Reason. But against this arbitrary dichotomy one must insist that Rationalism nowadays is simply the application of Reason to daily life, with the object of minimising friction. And this, of course, is just what the Gilles of this world really loathe; for to the sufferer from self-hatred nothing is so odious as a well-run environment. Conflict—no matter what the results in pain and death to others—is necessary to him, to mollify the itch of his disconsolate rancour. Useless to suggest self-examination, a little stoicism, a trial of good will; for such efforts might change the *persona* to which he obstinately clings. Hence his contemptuous hatred of the formal elements of society—meals taken together with others, parties, entertainments, etc. M. Drieu La Rochelle evidently feels a puritanical rage at the spectacle of people exchanging the superficialities of intercourse. This is folly. The mere forms of social life are inescapably the same, at all periods and whatever the political structure; four people exchanging pleasantries across a dinner-table are not necessarily deceiving themselves or one another, they are merely practising good feeling and furthering a kind of relationship without which no civilisation can exist. Such exercises are as necessary to mental health as physical exertion is to the body.

One longs to be able to say to Gilles: Unclench those hands of yours and sit still for half an hour. But he could not manage it: nothing will suffice save the destruction of the society with which he has failed to come to terms. He has *got* to be right,



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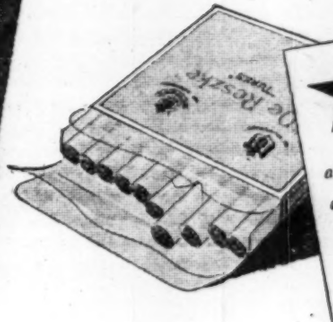

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therefore society *must* be rotten. So there he is, perpetually standing about at street-corners looking for a scrap. Men like this would, in a decent world, be put under restraint; nowadays we give them supreme power, and they proceed to degrade the human standards which cannot satisfy their lust, raise a generation of mindless brutes dedicated to a life of empty repetitiveness and exultant cruelty, and call the result *The Sense of Blood and Soil* or *Le Christianisme Viril du Moyen Âge*, as the case may be (no doubt the B.U.F. has its slogan ready too). "Better to live like a lion for a day than like a sheep for a hundred years," used to be a favourite quotation of Mussolini's. It does not seem to have occurred to that imposing intelligence that it is better still to live like a human being for three score years and ten.

It is always a profound sense of failure in *personal* life, coupled with the necessity for concealing this under a specious pretence of "Freeing Humanity," that is responsible for the beastliness of so many revolutionaries, Right and Left. These men—the street-corner touts of life—are in the deepest sense useless and must remain so until the science of psychology, universally applied, assists them to develop into adult human beings who can love their neighbours without desiring to tyrannise over them. Such men would then be components of a renewed liberal society—a Liberalism shorn of its nineteenth-century mistakes. In such a society "*Le Christianisme Viril du Moyen Âge*" would be seen to be what in fact it is—a piece of the past, and as such to be superseded.

Thus *Gilles* is not a sane book. Some, though not all, of the characters are both interesting and alive; Miriam and her father, Caël, Paul Morel, the *fainéant* Cyrille Galant, are masterly portraits. But the rigid attitude, the rancorous hostility to everything and everybody, the belief that you have only to open the floodgates and Utopia will come pouring in: these are not sane. Yet the book contains scenes and passages of dialogue that are astonishingly brilliant and vivid, observations and aphorisms that—like those of another *mauvais coucheur*, M. Malraux—linger in the mind, and the revelation of a personality which, if misdirected, is fascinatingly complete. For these reasons alone the book demands to be read. As a piece of propaganda-fiction it is enormously clever, amusing, astringent and suggestive, but also profoundly saddening.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

NEW NOVELS

Dutch Vet. By A. ROOTHRAERT. *Routledge.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Native Son. By RICHARD WRIGHT. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Way to Santiago. By ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog. By DYLAN THOMAS. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

A Book of Miracles. By BEN HECHT. *Nicholson and Watson.* 8*s.*

Dutch Vet is a title which does not inspire confidence, and as the hero spends a good deal of his time up to his shoulder inside cows, there is no use pretending that this is everybody's book. It is also only fair to the possible reader to say that the writer is not skillful and that the book is consequently an untidy slice of life. But for all its defects there can be no doubt that it is a good book. It builds up the picture of Brabant, of the small town in which the Vet has his practice, the life in the surrounding country, and character after character comes to life. The story rambles round the Vet's unhappy marriage and his futile attempt to obtain an annulment from Rome, round a complicated intrigue centring on a post in the local model slaughterhouse. It sounds appallingly dull, yet it is not; it has something of the charm of Kilvert—a life not specially interesting, but unfamiliar and described with an abundant sense of what is pleasant about it. Moreover, though the book is about country matters there is no taint of the rural fallacy, no whiff of the kailyard, omissions for which one can forgive a good deal. The story follows the inartistic plan of life, events follow no pattern, coincidences occur, and characters are disposed of by accidents, but these *faits divers* are held together and given order by a rational philosophy. It is not a particularly profound philosophy, but this restatement of the Latin defiance of the blind force and anarchy of nature is extremely agreeable as a counter to the recently published volumes of Arthur Van Schendel's Dutch triology, a work so clouded with primitive superstitions about Fate and Doom as to make it seem impossible that anyone could write such nonsense in the neighbourhood of reason. The Vet is a model of the good citizen at the end of the book; undefeated by his emotion he keeps his grief a private matter, he neither seeks refuge in malice, nor allows despair to affect his work, but, law-abiding and devoted, continues to serve the community to the best of his ability. He sounds like a prig although in fact he is the pleasant sort of person who makes life possible.

If the Dutch Vet is the good man on whom civilisation depends, the hero of *Native Son* is his enemy, the dumb ox with a habit of not using its brains. The pretension is that the book is a plea for the American Negro, the case being that the negro is as a rule "conditioned" to be a murderer. The poisonous guff of Behaviourism has already been so completely forgotten in England that one has a shock of surprise at finding the twaddle still cropping up other than as an element in farce or satire. The hero of the book is a negro born in the slums who gets a job through the humiliating channel of a relief organisation, his employers have a friendly attitude to negroes, he has a good room, and five pounds a week; within twelve hours of taking the job he has got drunk on (of all things) rum and murdered his employer's daughter—because he was black and because he was born in a slum. One just gives up in face of this acceptance of the helplessness of the individual, and the Behaviourist conception of the human mind; a mystery arrived at by watching immature humans and animals unable to talk or understand electricity. Under cover of his scientific pretences Mr. Wright is manipulating the doomed puppets handled by Van Schendel and happily spreading the black fog. The astounding thing is that the publisher is able to send out with the book a typescript, about the weight of a small Tor Bay Sole, entirely made up of favourable reviews from the American Press. Over here and away from that particular racial problem the book seems unimpressive and silly, not even as much fun as a thriller.

In an interesting article which appeared in *Horizon* Mr. George Orwell lamented the absence of a robust literature for children which, while thrilling and exciting them, would not poison their minds with "the worst illusions of 1910." *The Way to Santiago* could not be too highly recommended to anyone taking the article to heart who is looking for unpoisoned reading for older children. The scene is Mexico and it is a thriller on a classic model, starting with a mysterious murder, leading to a chase of a mysterious criminal and ending in the frustration of a sinister plot. The sinister figures are of the Right and their machinations are designed to grind the faces of the poor; the hero is an amigo of the trabajadores and with the aid of the companeros and the camaradas he succeeds in at any rate postponing the grinding by tracking the criminal and spoiling the machinations. The book perhaps suffers by the recent appearance of Mr. Graham Greene's novel about that country with its vigorous, if perverse, ideas. He made a strong story out of a tract—a feeble tract which he parodied freely in the course of its development—because the strength of the ideas held the story up as air tightens the skin of a balloon. Here a complex plot and a good deal of meticulous observation has the air of prattle because there is nothing to it but partisan sentiment. Mr. Calder-Marshall is one of those who have been playing battledore and shuttlecock with Benda's *Trahison des Clercs*, which makes this political thriller rather a rakish joke. Actually it demonstrates the point Benda wished to make. There has also been a critical article on Mr. Greene which makes it a very funny joke indeed.

As readers of Mr. Dylan Thomas's poetry will know, he is a

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master of the vivid phrase and in his stories he shows himself to be a skilful writer of prose. Unfortunately his trouble is finding anything to get the machine working; the prose tumbles out with a rich Welsh cadence but it isn't about anything at all. *The Artist as a Young Dog*, as the eighteenth century raffishness of the title suggests, is vigorous dramatisation of a youth which unfortunately has little unusual about it. Mr. Thomas nods and winks in a significant way at things which carry very little; the more earth-bound reader is likely to think of Mr. Sydney Howard saying "I've seen me when I were a lad" with a hint of unutterable things. On the other hand, disregarding content, the word patterns and the images have a good deal of charm.

A Book of Miracles is a religious document that should be studied in connection with *Dr. Hudson's Journal* and other such manifestations of a distressed culture. Written by the elfin writer whose name will be familiar to filmgoers in connection with that of Mr. Macarthur, it rises to such verbal splendours as "It came to God that the movie was over," and has a story about a soul caught—like a material object of some kind—in the molten metal of a steel girder. The Oxford Group Limited's chatty little god talks have dignity in comparison with this wise guy's revelation.

ANTHONY WEST

SOUTH-EASTERN SURVEY

South-Eastern Survey. By RICHARD WYNDHAM. *Batsford*. 8s. 6d.

It is only after a visit to the Far East that one becomes fully aware of the beauty, oddity and luxurious variety of the European landscape. For ancient and fascinating as are Eastern civilisations, there remain huge dismal interspaces—vast *lacunae*—where the genius of the human race has failed to flower. In the East you must travel purposefully from monument to monument. Between, there are jungles that have always been jungle, villages where life and labour have always been abject, perhaps an obscure shrine, the jerry-built home of some local demon. . . . To travel in Western Europe is to plough through the centuries. Within the radius of ten or fifteen English miles, you may be confronted in turn by a gigantic shuttered Palladian mansion, looming elephant-grey along the avenues of its damp green park, by a squat flinty Norman church among red-berried yew trees, a tile-hung Elizabethan farmhouse, a Victorian folly, the masterpiece of some crazy squire, or the ramparts of a Neolithic fortress scooped with prodigious industry from the chalk of a hill-side. The dullest shopping street is often a patchwork of associations; and it is partly his sensitiveness to the world of the past, together with his gift of relating it to the world of the present, that makes Mr. Richard Wyndham's *South-Eastern Survey* such a diverting guide-book. He sees the landscape of the Home Counties as an elaborate composite picture. It is made up not only of what he sees—and Mr. Wyndham sees a great deal, vividly, appreciatively, unself-consciously, from the *jeunes filles en fleur* of a modern sea-side resort to the gaunt skeletonious beauty of the downs above Lewes—but of what he has read and remembered and imagined. His battle pieces are particularly spirited, though (one cannot help suspecting) not always entirely accurate. Senlac comes to life, with Taillefer chanting the Song of Roland while, at the head of the Norman cavalry, he emulates the juggling feats of a modern drum major; or from the castle that looks out over Lewes' roof-tops Mr. Wyndham recreates the "Battle of the Barons," concluding his narrative on a note of lugubrious fantasy:

> By nightfall many houses were fired, and in the leaping glare massed troops would clash unexpectedly at street corners, while solitary frightened men scurried hither and thither, up and down the steep narrow alleys. . . . The noise must have been terrific when . . . the death of one knight sounded like an avalanche of tiles. . . . But this confused terror of battle was nothing compared to the final flight. . . . There was but one bridge across the river—probably a narrow wooden bridge—carried for some distance on piles so as to cross both the river and the deep marshes on either side. Of the hundreds jostled over the edge, the foot-soldiers sank in the mud out of sight; but the knights on their great armoured cart-horses were discovered next morning; for each of their lances still showed, like a submarine's periscope, above the surface; they sat firmly strapped to their saddles, holding up these lances in lifeless hands.

Mr. Wyndham's manual does not pretend to comprehensiveness; for its revision was cut short by the outbreak of war, and the territory he set out to survey is large and densely peopled. Nowadays the shadow of London stretches well beyond Brighton. Yet, although great areas of the Home Counties have been converted into the worst kind of suburban dormitory, and the thatch rots on the barn and nettles grow in the farmyard, while the stock-broker mows his lawn behind a converted labourer's cottage, how individual and solidly beautiful many villages are, how delicate the outline of those valleys and ridges, that once formed the smoky centre of industrial England, where there is some mark of human genius in every acre of country—in a tomb or a farmhouse chimney stack or a deserted hammer-pond! Mr. Wyndham is not only a sensitive observer: he is also an extremely accomplished photographer. Even though it were unsupported by text or commentary, the book would be worth buying for its illustrations. There are more than a hundred of them—uniformly admirable.

PETER QUENNELL

Prose of Purpose. Selected by ALEXANDER LAW, J. W. OLIVER and H. J. L. ROBBIE. *Oliver and Boyd*. 3s. 6d.

Recently in these columns we criticised the format of school text books; and now there comes to hand, to refute us, a volume from one of the publishers who provide for school use books agreeable enough in print and binding to stand on any bookshelf. More than that *Prose of Purpose* (but surely the title, this time, could hardly be more discouraging?) is a well chosen anthology, without that emphasis on the whimsical and the patriotic which we remember such books having a few years ago. Of the nine sections only one is devoted to fighting—and that includes Samuel Johnson on the evils of war; a whole section is given to science, including extracts from Descartes, Isaac Newton and Sir Arthur Thomson; music and the visual arts receive proper attention; translations from Greek and Roman authors are drawn upon; while the longest section is concerned with the meaning and the working of democracy.

Week-end Competitions

No. 532

Set by V. S. Pritchett

The usual prizes are offered for epitaphs each in the form of a rhyming couplet, on any three of the following; (1) a nurse, (2) a solicitor, (3) an air raid warden, (4) a doctor, (5) a preacher, (6) a plumber, (7) a best seller, (8) a telephone operator (9) an official.

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RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, April 26th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 530

Set by John Roberts

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for a diary similar to our feature—THE COMING WEEK—but consisting of items which would attract the smallest audiences. Copying past "Coming Week" diaries is taboo!

Report by John Roberts

A number of competitors fell into the trap of assuming that even a well-known name would not attract a crowd for a lecture with an absurd title. An audience is assured for well-known speakers even on their own subjects. What I wanted was a diary with items which sounded feasible but which would fail to arouse the smallest interest. Many entries relied for their unattractiveness on the place of venue, which was too easy a way out.

FIRST PRIZE

Friday—
Fabian Society Lecture: Sir Rollo Leaper, M.F.H., on "Etiquette of the Hunting Field," 7.45.

Saturday—
Meeting of Communist Peers, 2.30.

Sunday—
Open-air Victory and Thanksgiving Service outside the Russian Embassy, 2.
Concert of Iceland sacred music, Queen's Hall, 3.
Appeal on behalf of oppressed German Minorities in Britain and France, 8.45.

Monday—
Recital of Modern Siamese Poetry, Central Hall, 1.30.

Tuesday—
Professor Drybones: "The Evolution of the Dustcart," 99 Old Kent Road, 5.30.
Exhibition of photos of the King of Italy, Bakerloo.

Wednesday—
Meretriskus' Nine Hour Symphony played by Blitzkriegski, Grosvenor Hotel, 2-11.

Thursday—
Demonstration of ways of cooking caviare, New Statesman Offices, 11.
Meeting of Friends of Evacuation, Hogsnorton, 2.

REDLING

SECOND PRIZE

Saturday, April 13th—
International Spies' Rally, Queen's Hall, 3 p.m. (Bring credentials.)
Royal Society of Grammarians: Public Lecture: "The Past Participle in Aramaic, Gower Street, 7 p.m.

Sunday, April 14th—
Bach Recital by Massed Fair Organs, Crystal Palace Grounds, 3 p.m. Admission 2s. 6d.
Poetry Recital by Edith Sitwell: "Paradise Lost" (in its entirety), Whispering Gallery, St. Paul's Cathedral, 10 p.m.

Monday, April 15th—
"The Case for an Increase in Income Tax," Mr. Smith, Abercorn Rooms, 2.30.

Tuesday, April 16th—
Lunch Hour address to Ex-Convicts, "Social Stability," Friends' House, 12.30.

Wednesday, April 17th—
Lunch to New Statesman Prize-winners 1939-40, Speaker: Allan Laing, Vegetarian Restaurant, Ludgate Hill.

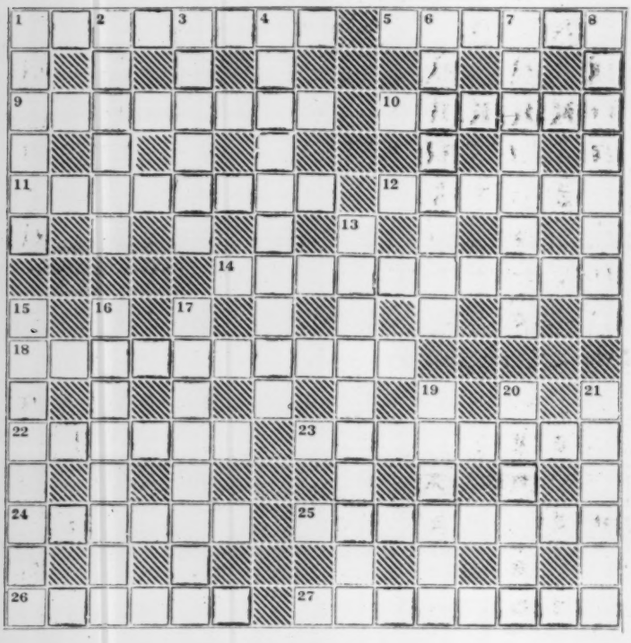
Thursday, April 18th—
Inaugural Meeting: Friends of Hitler Society, Tooting Club Rooms (opp. Police Station), 7.30.

Friday, April 19th—
Annual Dinner, London Branch of Men of Rutland Society, Milk Bar, Shaftesbury Avenue, 8 p.m.
Exhibition of Razor Blades and Strops, Victoria and Albert Museum. (Ends November 18th.)

ELLEN EVANS

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 528

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Miss D. E. Arnold, Nalgo Centre, Croyde, nr. Braunton, Devon

ACROSS——

1. Imprecation to wipe out the whole clan. (8)
5. The right wing energetically shot it in. (6)
9. Give a foothold to those who use 4. (8)
10. Doctrine of old world non-intervention. (6)
11. "Homilies already — or hereafter to be —." (8)
12. South American wool grower. (6)
14. Fingered like a clock? (10)
18. The one the mouse ran down perhaps. (10)
22. One dreads them when they turn. (6)
23. Shows how infants proclaim themselves of age. (8)
24. He was boared to death. (6)
25. The gold one is never broken. (8)
26. The conclusion is that it improves with the morning. (6)
27. Spring drink. (8)

DOWN——

1. The bus had an interpreter in it. (6)
2. Broken statue. (6)
3. Shepherd's substitute for horsewhip? (6)
4. Used to produce a dry clean effect. (10)
6. No pilot — in this country if he could help it. (8)
7. Model helper. (8)
8. Mere lads can turn them out. (8)
13. Describes one whose spouse is a drawback. (10)
15. Child's play takes the biscuit. (8)
16. Height of the ploughboy's ambition? (8)
17. Is no mere rehash. (8)
19. The most showy person of his time. (6)
20. Verses of scripture. (6)
21. What exponents of unconcerned intervention do. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

H	A	W	K	M	O	T	H	■	■	R	O	G	U	E
A	■	E	■	I	■	A	■	I	■	E	■	P	■	L
L	E	A	D	S	■	L	O	N	G	S	H	O	R	E
E	■	T	■	D	■	L	■	D	■	I	■	■	■	M
■	T	H	R	E	E	B	L	I	N	D	M	I	C	E
F	■	E	■	A	■	O	■	G	■	U	■	N	■	N
R	U	R	A	L	L	Y	■	O	V	E	R	S	E	T
O	■	F	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	T	■	A
N	O	O	D	L	E	S	■	T	E	R	R	I	E	R
T	■	R	■	E	■	A	■	E	■	A	■	T	■	Y
S	E	E	■	H	O	W	T	H	E	Y	R	U	N	■
E	■	C	■	C	■	Y	■	C	■	L	■	T	■	T
A	P	A	R	T	M	E	N	T	■	E	X	I	L	E
T	■	S	■	A	■	R	■	A	■	S	■	O	■	G
S	I	T	E	S	■	■	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S

NOTE:—G.P.O.—G.P. with nothing on. Institution—anag. of It, It, It, nouns.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

NEW REQUISITIONING ORDER—UNFAIRNESS OF TREASURY METHODS

How the Treasury selects the American stocks which it decides to requisition may seem a complete mystery. It might be imagined that it behaves like Caliban's irresponsible God in Browning's poem. Thought Caliban: "Am strong myself compared with yonder crabs, That march now from the mountain to the sea, Let twenty pass and stone the twenty-first, Loving not, hating not, just choosing so." This might well be the attitude of the Treasury officials drawing up the second list of requisitioned American securities which was published this week. They have picked out U.S. Steel and ignored Bethlehem Steel, New York Central Railroad but not Pennsylvania, Chrysler but not General Motors, and so on. If the first list acquired between £25 and £30 millions worth of securities, the second, which is wider, probably accounts for double that amount. And it follows within two months of the first. No haste is unseemly in time of war if the principle of the action is right, but no principle seems to attach to these requisitioning orders except that of accommodating the American Government. In a Presidential election year Washington is naturally very sensitive to the feelings of the well-to-do man-in-the street who sees the European war too much through the eyes of American business. There has no doubt been some disappointment in the United States over certain delays in Allied war orders—the fact that the physical volume of American exports is already up to the peak level of the world war is not usually commented on. There were complaints too about the insistence of the Allied Commission on purchasing up-to-date and not obsolete types of American war-planes. That the Allies should endeavour to pay for their orders in gold is regarded as adding insult to injury. The American Treasury is holding about $17,800 millions of gold, and to receive additions to this monstrous pile in payment for American exports is regarded by those who cannot see any function for America in a world economy as tantamount to giving the goods away. So the American Treasury politely suggests that although the United States are supposed to be working a gold standard they would be obliged if the Allied Governments would refrain from acting on that supposition, in other words, would refrain from sending more gold as long as they can sell dollar securities. Besides, as the dollar securities requisitioned look cheap to the American buyer, there may be Americans who are gratified to think that they are picking up bargains out of the European war. And that really explains why the British Treasury is now inflicting heavy losses on the British holders of American securities.

* * *

I have received many letters from investors complaining bitterly of the disorderly and unfair method of Treasury requisitioning. I have known hard cases where the small investor has had his entire American holdings seized in the first Treasury list at a loss on cost of several thousands of pounds. Sir Irving Albery asked Sir John Simon in the House of Commons this week whether the Treasury was pursuing any method "with a view to distributing the burden equitably over various holders." In his reply this master of evasion said that the "primary consideration in choosing securities was that of national interest," which meant nothing, and to a supplementary question added, "Every care is taken in the selection of securities, but it would not be a good step to requisition the entire U.K. holdings of dollar securities." Who ever suggested that it was? Sir John vaguely added that the "disposal of the securities took place at a later date," but that did not mean that the Treasury was speculating in American securities. No, but someone is. The speculators are the American syndicates who are buying these securities from the forced sellers. They are making bids to the Treasury agents for stocks which they regard as cheap and likely to have a quick and substantial rise. Take the example of "Nickel plate preferred"—New York, Chicago and St. Louis 6 per cent. preferred stock. This stock is taken over at £8 1s. 9d. per $100 (say $32½), yet the stock earned $9.35 in the twelve months to December 31st. In other words, the Treasury is forcing British holders to sell it to American speculators on a 29 per cent. earnings yield basis. This in my opinion is immoral and unfair and injurious to the interests of the country. The whole requisitioning policy should be reconsidered and investigated by Parliament. Some system should be devised which should distribute the damage more equitably over the whole body of expropriated holders.

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AN IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING "SMALLS" is on page 545

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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

MAY 13 1940

The Week-end Review

Vol. XIX. No. 479 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1940 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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WHO IS THREATENED NEXT?

HALF the art of war consists in guessing correctly what the enemy will do next. Hitler scores by compelling us to scatter our guesses over the entire map of Europe. Anyone who collected the available evidence with impartial industry could make out a convincing case for an early German attack on Sweden or Holland, or in a move with Italian participation in the Balkans. Against Sweden the Nazi press rages with significant fury: numerous German war-planes violate Swedish territory, and it is reported that yet another expeditionary force is gathering in Germany's Baltic ports. The threat to Holland is grave enough to make tension between Tokio and Washington, over the eventual protection of the Dutch Indies, and Japan is apparently preparing for action by intensive negotiations in Moscow to ensure the friendly neutrality of the Soviet Union. All the threatened neutrals are dealing with their Fifth Columns and with suspicious "foreign" agents. It is conceivable that in an effort to end the war quickly Hitler might risk simultaneous offensive in several directions.

Field-Marshal Göring threatens the Norwegians with terror from the air. Except in the southern districts his ability to do this may be limited for lack of available aerodromes. In Norway there are only four of any consequence, one at Stavanger one at Christiansand, two at Oslo. That is why our air arm has kept up its attacks almost daily on the first of these, and less frequently on the others. It is also attacking the air-bases on the other side of the water, at Sylt and at Aalborg in Denmark. The main problem from our angle is to stop German supplies and reinforcements both by sea and air. To control this coast with its innumerable fjords, each a labyrinth of indentations and islands, is excessively difficult. Our submarines are taking a heavy toll of German ships, but they still accept the risk and some doubtless arrive. Our own penetration of the country has begun, but of reliable news there is little. Our first detachments have landed safely at Namsos and Aandalsnes, north and south of Trondheim, and its German garrison has met the former body of Allied troops in a first encounter at Steinkjer. Since we have as yet no aerodromes in Norway, Allied troops are subjected to German bombing unrestrained by counter-measures. British bombers can attack in Norway, but fighter aeroplanes cannot operate there from home bases. Another landing was made at the far end of Norway's longest fjord, at Laerdal. From this point of rail and road detachments, presumably small, rushed inland with some tanks and joined the Norwegian forces to the north of Hamar and Elverum. The moral effect of this help must have been great, but in this excessively difficult country it is unlikely that Allied troops are as yet present in large numbers. On the other hand, neither side can use or deploy large numbers among these mountains. At Narvik the German force has been driven from the town, but is still in being in the hills.

Meanwhile in the Mediterranean Mussolini still intones the watchword "arm and prepare," and part at least of the staff of the Fascist Party appears to favour an early entry into the war. This the Italian press is facilitating by representing the operations in Norwegian waters as a reverse for the British Navy. Opinion in the Allied countries is somewhat divided about the suggestion that Italy may contemplate an attack on Yugoslavia. M. Reynaud, at a secret sitting of the Senate, recalled the fact that M. Daladier offered in September to discuss Italian claims on France directly. There was, he complained, no response from Rome, but France was still ready for such a discussion. The French Right retains its old tenderness for Italian Fascism and M. Reynaud may have to move warily, but the publication of this statement suggested weakness. On the other hand, the *Daily Telegraph* in an obviously inspired statement, has declared that we should treat any attack on a Balkan State as a *casus belli*. Some rather obscure phrases in the communiqué reporting the meeting of the Supreme War Council can be interpreted in this sense. Yugoslavia, meanwhile, is dealing energetically with her Fifth Column and has arrested the former pro-Nazi Premier, M. Stoyadinovitch, with his Chief of Police. She is also expelling large numbers of German "tourists." The news from Rumania is somewhat contradictory. Large numbers of the pro-German Iron Guard have been released from internment, but this we are asked to interpret as a demonstration of national unity. On the other hand, negotiations with the celebrated Dr. Clodius over the lei-mark exchange ended in a German reverse. Luck in these waters has favoured the Allies, for in a well-timed collision in the fairway of the Danube at Sulina two ships, one doubtfully Greek, the other perhaps Italian, managed to sink each other. In short, the available indications point on the whole to resistance.